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Arab-Israeli Talks

Israeli-PLO Negotiations Continue in Cairo

Musa, Peres, 'Abbas News Conference

NC2912142593 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1335 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa described the Palestinian-Israeli talks today and yesterday in Cairo as very constructive. The talks, he said, delved into the core of the major issues of the dispute.

This came in a news conference held by 'Amr Musa, Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, head of the Palestinian side to the talks, and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, head of the Israeli delegation, after they met President Husni Mubarak today. Musa said the points the two sides agreed upon will be discussed by the two delegations with their respective leaderships.

The foreign minister noted that President Mubarak telephoned Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat this afternoon. He added that 'Arafat will come to Cairo very soon.

'Amr Musa pointed out during the news conference that the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations will continue after each delegation discusses with its leadership the points they agreed upon.

Mahmud 'Abbas, Abu-Mazin, thanked Egypt—president, government, and people—for the effort to make these talks succeed.

He pointed out that the Palestinian and Israeli delegations formulated constructive ideas, which they will discuss with their leaders, regarding the three issues of the crossings, Jericho, and Gaza.

He said that the subcommittees will discuss the remaining points. He stressed that the Liaison Committee will resume its work within a week or more.

Peres praised Egypt's efforts to make the negotiations successful. He said this round of talks was constructive and addressed various issues.

Peres, who is also head of his country's delegation to the Liaison Committee, which is currently convening in Cairo, spoke at the beginning of the news conference. He thanked President Mubarak and Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa for the positive and useful role they have played in narrowing the differences that emerged during the talks between the Israeli and Palestinian delegations.

He said the delegations crystallized some ideas regarding the various disputed issues: the crossings, the area of Jericho, and some articles pertaining to the Gaza Strip.

Peres added that the situation is that the leaderships of the two sides are discussing these ideas. We are awaiting the Palestinian leadership's answer. Our answer will come after that at the appropriate time.

Peres added: We agreed that both sides will advise the Taba Committee to approve our agreement so that we waste no more time and we can dedicate ourselves to the necessary preparations for the agreement. This will take place at the earliest possible opportunity.

Peres said there are still some other basic issues that will be considered. The two delegations will discuss them in a meeting to be held next week in Cairo. Peres said: We decided to continue our work while waiting for the leaderships of the two sides to approve the agreements we reached.

He said the negotiations were not simple. There were many proposals and settlements. He added: We found the appropriate circumstances and atmosphere for our talks in Cairo as well as support from the Egyptian leadership. I wish to express my deep thanks to Egypt.

Mahmud 'Abbas also spoke during the news conference. He said: We had in-depth and important talks today. The Egyptian contribution, which was represented by the presence of President Mubarak and Minister 'Amr Musa, greatly affected these negotiations.

'Abbas added: We are currently holding the third round of negotiations. We held two rounds in Oslo and Paris. I believe that the negotiations in Cairo were very constructive. Ideas are being discussed by the leaders. We will continue our discussions, and we hope that we will reach a comprehensive agreement on the points, including the crossings issue, Gaza, and Jericho.

Mahmud 'Abbas said: These are the three points. Naturally, there are other issues that are being discussed by the subcommittees in Taba. He noted that these committees will continue their work. He said: As Mr. Peres said, we hope we will meet in a week or two as part of a follow-up committee or a liaison committee to achieve the required progress or the required success.

'Abbas said: I would like to repeat my profound thanks to Egypt—its president and its people—for their continuing efforts.

Asked to specify the remaining problems, Peres said that it will take time to solve the remaining problems. These problems, such as the problem of how to administer security on the roads in the Gaza Strip, cannot be discussed in detail with the press.

Peres added that it would be good if the Taba committee, which will meet soon, manages to work out a solution to these problems. If nothing is achieved, we will then discuss these problems in the Liaison Committee next week in Cairo.

In response to a question about the proposals to resolve on the main points of dispute, Abu-Mazin said the ideas submitted on the three points are now being discussed by the leaders.

Asked about a possible meeting between 'Arafat and Rabin in the near future, Peres said: I do not think that such a meeting could take place during the negotiations. It could take place after (?an agreement) has been reached.

Replying to a question about the obstacles to the implementation of the Declaration of Principles, Abu-Mazin said: We are extremely eager to reach an agreement as soon as possible because we want this declaration to be implemented. We will continue the talks in this direction, 'Abbas added.

Asked how long it will take the Palestinian leadership to respond to the points of agreement reached by this committee, Rabin said: The sooner the better, but it seems that the Palestinian side will need a long time. From our point of view, every hour that passes is vital. The Israeli response will be made after the Palestinian reply.

Replying to a question about the achievements made by the Liaison Committee during this round of talks, Peres said that the sides have reached an agreement on the crossings issue, Jericho, and the Gaza Strip.

To a question about the efforts made by Egypt in this regard, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said: I would like to say that the discussions were extremely useful, interspersed as they were with in-depth deliberations on various issues. He said that the two sides would discuss these issues with their leaderships, adding that the Palestinian side talked with President 'Arafat early today about the general framework of the discussions.

Continuing, the foreign minister said: We expect that President Yasir 'Arafat will visit Egypt very soon. President Mubarak spoke with the Palestinian president over the telephone this afternoon.

'Amr Musa said: There is an agreement between the two sides to continue the discussions. The other committees and the subcommittees will soon meet to discuss all the issues, which will also be dealt with by the leaderships. He said: This is the nature of negotiations and talks. We were hopeful that an agreement would have been achieved before 13 December, but this is what happened and the two sides are making utmost efforts to reach an agreement.

In conclusion, the foreign minister said: We are now passing through a very delicate stage of negotiations.

Peres on Cairo 'Compromise Paper'

TA2912211093 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 2030 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres says the date for completing IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdrawal from Jericho will be four months after the agreement is signed, not necessarily on 13 April. Minister Peres says he prefers the withdrawal be completed by 13 April, but since the agreement has not been signed yet, Israel still has four months for implementation. The foreign minister told our political correspondent Udi Segal that in the compromise paper drafted by the Liaison Committee there were no deviations from Israel's security principles. According to the compromise agreement, a PLO flag will be hoisted only on the Palestinian checkpoint inside the terminal, not at the border crossing. It was also decided that the people entering Gaza and Jericho will be examined by Palestinians under Israeli supervision. Border control will be solely under IDF jurisdiction. The Jericho area will include 55 square km, and will include the al-'Awja' area, without touching the Jewish settlements.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 2100 GMT on 29 December adds: "Our political correspondent reports that Prime Minister Rabin and PLO Chairman 'Arafat will not hold a meeting until the completion of the discussions in the Taba military committee. The head of the Palestinian delegation to the Taba talks, Nabil Sha'th, assessed that these discussions will apparently end in about two or three weeks."]

'Arafat Reply to Draft Awaited

NC3012102593 Paris AFP in English 1004 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Report by Patrick Anidjar]

[Excerpt] Jerusalem, Dec 30 (AFP)—Israel waited Thursday [30 December] for a reply from PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat on a draft understanding on the main obstacles blocking the launch of Palestinian autonomy.

"Yes we are waiting for an answer," Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben Ari told AFP. "So far we have not heard any official reaction from 'Arafat."

According to a document drawn up by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in Cairo on Wednesday, the size of the autonomous area of Jericho will be doubled from the original offer and the border crossings into Jordan and Egypt will be jointly manned under a complicated arrangement.

"The document is not negotiable. It's yes or no," warned an Israeli negotiator, who refused to be named. [passage omitted]

Implementation 'Can Start' at New Year

NC2912143593 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1405 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—MENA has learned that the Palestinian-Israeli Liaison Committee has reached a semiagreement on the schedule to implement the Gaza-Jericho First agreement, with the exception of some issues that need the approval of Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin.

These sources said that if President 'Arafat and Rabin approve the draft agreement, the two sides can sign it tomorrow, Thursday, in Cairo and its implementation can start at the beginning of the new year.

Jordan 'Concerned' Over Agreement

TA3012095293 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 30 Dec 93 p 2

[Report by Pinhas 'Inbari]

[Text] Jordan is concerned by the understandings reached in Cairo between Foreign Minister Peres and PLO representative Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], and has relayed its concern to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin through various channels.

Foreign diplomatic sources in Israel told our correspondent that according to Jordan, handing over to the PLO the Muslim site of al-Nabi Musa constitutes a direct threat to Jordan's status because the site is being managed by the Muslim waqf, which is part of the Jordanian Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ministry.

Jordan views its standing in the waqf management at the al-'Aqsa Mosque as a supreme Jordanian interest, and will not allow the PLO to erode it.

The second issue bothering Jordan are what it calls the concessions Israel has made to the Palestinians regarding their status in [the border crossing of] the Allenby Bridge, mainly the fact that the Palestinian flag will be displayed there. Jordan also refuses to have its citizens undergo security checks by Palestinians. Jordan has threatened to close the border-crossing station on its side of the bridge.

Our correspondent notes that, in parallel with the Israel-PLO talks about the procedures of crossing the bridges, secret talks are being conducted with Jordan.

Agreement on Crossings Detailed

TA2912154193 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1500 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Telephone report from Cairo by YEDI'OT AHARONOT correspondent Smadar Peri—live]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] The draft says that Israel and the PLO have an agreement in writing on an Israeli withdrawal from 55 square km of the Jericho area, which will be handed over to the Palestinians.

Regarding control over the border crossings, the teams dealt with interior decoration of the checkpoints. There will be three tracks of inspection:

1. An entrance for Israelis and visitors to Israel
2. An entrance to the Palestinian areas and the entrance of Palestinians
3. A VIP entrance

The Palestinians will have a veto right over entrance to their territories, but Israel will have a supreme veto right over the three tracks. In a gesture to the Palestinians, Israel agreed its veto will be invisible [as heard]. [passage omitted]

[In a related report, Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 29 December adds: "Reports from Tunis claim that the PLO rejects Israel's latest proposals regarding control over the border crossings and is demanding that the Palestinians possess total control over the crossings." "In reaction, Israeli sources in Jerusalem said Israel is not in a hurry and that the negotiations can continue as long as necessary. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the Palestinians have in fact agreed to have settlement blocs in the Gaza Strip, but are demanding to receive possession of private lands and state-controlled land within the blocs. Israel will examine these demands."]

PLO Insists on Control of Crossings

LD2912191593 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] The Palestine Liberation Organization's Executive Committee, headed by brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], president of the state of Palestine and head of the PLO's Executive Committee, assessed in the Tunisian capital this morning the outcome of current talks in Cairo within the Palestinian-Israeli Liaison Committee.

The Executive Committee found that the Israeli side had retreated from its previous positions tabled in Oslo, Paris, and Tunis.

The Israeli side returned to insisting on total control and supervision of all crossing points and bridges leading to the Gaza Strip and Jericho region from which the Israeli Army will withdraw in line with the declaration of principles agreement signed by the two sides. That matter [Israeli insistence] would make the withdrawal a mere redeployment of Israeli forces in these areas and make it void of substance.

The PLO's Executive Committee insists on guaranteeing the right of the Palestinian side to total control of crossings into the areas from which the Israeli Army will withdraw, and on participation in supervising crossings into other areas. It is prepared for the necessary coordination between the two sides, with international participation, in line with that same agreement.

The PLO's Executive Committee held the Israeli side responsible for putting obstacles in front of current negotiations and delaying committing itself to the timetable for the start of the Israeli withdrawal from these areas and carrying it out on the fixed 13 April 1994 date.

Musa, 'Arafat View 'Points of Disagreement'

NC3012104193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1014 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 30 Dec (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat met Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa today. Afterward, Musa said there are still some points of disagreement between the Palestinian and Israeli parties on the implementation of the Gaza-Jericho agreement.

He noted that efforts are under way to settle the differences and reach an agreement.

Mubarak Meets 'Arafat, Delegation

NC2912195893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1935 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak held a private meeting with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat at the presidential office this evening. They were joined later by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and from the Palestinian side by Mahmud 'Abbas, PLO Executive Committee member; Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, head of the PLO's Information Department; Ahmad Quray', alias Abu-'Ala', head of the PLO's Economic Department; Sa'id Kamal, Palestine ambassador in Cairo; Akram Haniyah, adviser to the Palestinian president for the occupied territories' affairs; and Zuhdi al-Qidrah, Fatah representative in Cairo.

Musa on Mubarak-'Arafat Meeting

NC2912215493 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Excerpts] President Husni Mubarak received Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat at the presidential office this evening. [passage omitted]

Speaking after the Mubarak-'Arafat meeting, which lasted for approximately 90 minutes, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said that several topics under discussion had been reviewed. He added: The discussion with President 'Arafat and the Palestinian delegation will continue and we will submit a report on the discussion to President Mubarak tomorrow morning to see what we can do in this regard.

Musa emphasized that there is no crisis in the Palestinian-Israeli talks, but some differences in views do exist. He added: We hope the two sides will reach an agreement in the near future.

Asked about the Palestinian president's reaction to the recent proposals, Musa said: The proposals are the focus of attention of President 'Arafat and the Palestinian delegation. There is a convergence of views on some points and some differences in views in other points, but the two sides continue to negotiate to reach an understanding over the points of difference.

Asked about the time these talks may take, Musa said that he could not predict or set a specific timetable, adding that he hopes an agreement will be reached in the near future. He added: This could take between two to three weeks, and this is an approximate time as estimated by the Israeli foreign minister and others.

Musa added that 'Arafat will stay in Cairo to hold more consultations and talks.

PLO Officials Deny Progress in Talks

JN3012072493 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 30-31 Dec 93 pp 1,5

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter Lamis K. Andoni]

[Text] Amman—Despite Israeli reports about progress in their autonomy negotiations, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials said talks which concluded on Wednesday [29 December] in Cairo, did not succeed in removing major obstacles impeding the implementation of Palestinian self-rule in Gaza Strip and Jericho.

A senior Palestinian negotiator categorically denied Israeli reports that the two sides had reached an understanding regarding control over crossing points and the area of Jericho that will come under Palestinian administration.

"This is the first in the history of negotiations that a stalemate is described as progress," PLO Executive Committee member Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, who took part in the Cairo meetings, told the JORDAN TIMES before leaving the Egyptian capital.

"We have reached no agreement whatsoever. There is a paper outlining basically Israeli ideas, and some of the Palestinian ideas raised at the negotiations. But we cannot call it an understanding, let alone an agreement," said Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh.

Other PLO officials accused Israel of backtracking on understandings reached last week in Paris regarding the crossing points. The officials said that the Israelis had expressed readiness, in Paris to accept a Palestinian proposal asking for four crossing points, including one for those travelling to and from Jericho and Gaza that will be fully under Palestinian control.

They also said that in Paris the Israelis did not object to expanding the area of Jericho that will come under Palestinian administration, to about 100 square kilometres.

"The Israelis have definitely retracted. There was no trace of the flexibility that they showed in Paris," said one PLO official describing the Cairo talks.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Mahmud 'Abbas told reporters that all proposals that were put forward in Cairo were to be discussed by both leaderships ending the talks with a more positive note.

Mr. 'Abbas' cautiously positive tone appeared to differ from the reaction of both Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh and PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, who arrived in Cairo immediately after the negotiations, to meet with Egyptian officials.

The PLO ambassador in Amman al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim was quoted as saying in agency reports that Mr. 'Arafat was going to convey to the Israelis, through Egypt, that the (Israeli) proposals were "humiliating."

But Palestinian officials said that the PLO had officially rejected the paper as a basis for an agreement despite Egyptian intervention to save the talks from reaching a deadlock.

The conflicting Palestinian and Israeli accounts of the outcome of the Cairo talks clearly indicated that Israel wants to step up pressure on the PLO to accept its proposals concerning crossing points and the area of Jericho.

Some Palestinian officials said that the Egyptians and Saudis were pressuring the PLO to accept the Israeli proposals as a compromise starting point.

According to PLO officials, what the Israelis call an understanding was basically an Israeli paper that included modification introduced by the Egyptians in an attempt to include some of the Palestinian concerns.

The paper, endorsed by the Israelis, suggests that Palestinians take part in supervising one of two windows on the King Husayn Bridge between Jordan and the West Bank under total Israeli control, they said.

"Palestinian participation will be confined to one of two windows dealing with Palestinian travellers, but the Israelis will retain control of the King Husayn Bridge," said a Palestinian official describing the Israeli proposals.

He explained that the Israeli paper made it clear by implication that the Palestinians cannot have any role over the other crossing points.

Israel Radio reported earlier on Wednesday that Israel would allow Palestinians to have checkpoints 500 metres into the border preceded by Israeli checkpoints—meaning that Israel would retain the actual control.

According to the PLO official, a number of modalities and scenarios were discussed in Cairo. He said that Israel did not have problems with the modalities as long it retained actual control over the borders and crossings.

In the paper described by the Israelis a joint understanding, Israel was ready to expand the area of Jericho to around 70 kilometres. The Palestinians insisted on 250 square kilometres within the pre-1967 war borders of the Jericho district.

The only point that the two sides seemed to be of close on reaching a compromise, according to Palestinian officials, concerned the area of territories that Israel would need to connect about 23 Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian officials said that Israel showed new flexibility to reduce the area of the territories that it will keep to connect the settlements to reinforce and ensure their security during the interim period. Israel had originally asked for around 36 kilometres in addition to the five square kilometres that the settlements occupy—amounting to a total of 10 per cent of the sprawling Strip's area.

No details were available about the proposed compromise in Gaza, but the reports underscored reinforced Palestinian criticism of the Palestinian negotiating strategy.

"The issue of the land is the most crucial. If the PLO accepts to relinquish one square metre of the land that Israel demands, then that will seriously jeopardise our legitimate claim to the occupied Palestinian territories," said Dr. Taysir 'Aruri from the Palestine People's Party (PPP).

Dr. 'Aruri was expressing mounting concern that by focusing all the attention of the control over the crossings the PLO might be ignoring the crucial issue of the settlements.

Western experts who know the Israeli scene well agree with Mr. Aruri's assessment that the PLO should concentrate its efforts to prevent Israel from using their security as a pretext to retain more land under the army's control.

But Mr. 'Arafat believes that control of the crossings is crucial to future Palestinian sovereignty. "I will not accept (a South African style) Bantustan," he is often quoted as saying in official and private meetings.

Some Palestinian and Western analysts, including some from within the PLO, disagree, pointing out that Mr. 'Arafat should not make a big fuss over the crossing points since Israel will not yield its control over the borders during the interim period.

Mr. 'Abbas who signed the autonomy accord with Israel on Sept. 13 in Washington, is said to differ with Mr. 'Arafat over the negotiating strategy. According to PLO officials, he has no illusions about the possibility of Palestinian control over the crossings.

But Mr. 'Arafat was able to rally crucial support within the PLO Executive Committee and his Fatah movement for his negotiating demands inspite of rising criticism of the way he is handling the peace process.

There are two interpretations of why Mr. 'Arafat is holding to his guns: The first suggests that he is deliberately demanding Palestinian control over the crossings, but will later mellow in order not to yield to Israeli demands for keeping Palestinian territories. The second interpretation by his critics fears exactly the opposite tactic: that Mr. 'Arafat is focusing the attention on the crossing points to overshadow the concessions that he is ready to make regarding territories that Israel will keep "to maintain the security of the settlements."

The obvious failure of the Cairo talks is expected to place Mr. 'Arafat under pressure to reassess his negotiating strategy. The PLO has already agreed to meet a delegation representing a recently emerging reformist movement next week in Tunis. The delegation will be headed by Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, the chief Palestinian negotiator to the Washington peace talks.

Al-Tibi Explains Rejection of Proposals

TA3012115393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Telephone interview with Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, "political adviser to PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat," by Gid'on Zelinger—live]

[Text] [Zelinger] According to our reports, full agreement was more or less reached with the PLO delegation in Cairo, and the problem is 'Arafat, who is having second thoughts.

[Al-Tibi] No, I do not think it is the problem of a single person. The Palestinian leadership read the Israeli proposal presented in Cairo, and as a whole it is unacceptable. There are a number of unacceptable points although serious and positive work was done and a great effort was invested in order to reach those important phrasings, but the proposal as a whole is unacceptable to the Palestinian leadership. Efforts are being made at this very moment in Cairo between President 'Arafat and President Mubarak, who has an important and positive role to play in the efforts to bridge these gaps between the two sides, to resolve the issues.

[Zelinger] Could you clarify what you have just said to us? I understand that there has not been a total rejection of each and every clause. There are apparently some fundamental problems, and if they are overcome, the agreement can be signed.

[Al-Tibi] I think that was a good analysis, but nobody says that there is a rift or that we do not even want to look at that document. There are some important points of principle which are unacceptable to the Palestinian leadership.

[Zelinger] Please explain what you are saying because I am sure you are not talking about the glass partition which will separate Palestinian and Israeli customs inspectors.

[Al-Tibi] You are right. I do not think I have to go into the details of the document, which regrettably was published in the Israeli media, like many other things that are leaked at a fantastic pace even while deliberations are going on. We can only express our regret over that. The issues are the Jericho area, control of the border crossings, the security problem, especially in Gaza, and Gaza's settlement problem. Not everything in that document is acceptable to the Palestinian leadership. There are issues on which there has to be more flexibility and on which deliberations have to continue in a serious manner. By the way, I am sure that although there is no agreement yet—and there is none—I have no doubt that in the long run the agreement will be signed by both sides due to the fact that it is in the interest of both sides to sign it.

[Zelinger] In the long run sounds quite open-ended. You do not have a target date. Is that a healthy situation? You heard, as we did, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres' remarks last night [about a compromise paper reached in the Cairo talks].

[Al-Tibi] I think 13 April is the date that the withdrawal should be completed, just as was agreed in the Declaration of Principles. I think that signatures should be honored, and I am sure that both the Israeli side and the Palestinian side will act to honor these agreements. It does not bode well to say that a certain date will not be honored. Anyway, we should, and we will, make an enormous effort to continue the blessed effort being made in Cairo to reach an agreement, sign it, and meet the 13 April timetable.

[Zelinger] Today, there was the attack in Gaza and the attempted infiltration on the northern border. Terrorism continues. Is there any chance that groups like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Islamic Jihad, and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] will put down their arms and start talking?

[Al-Tibi] I think that everything must be done to hasten the signing of the agreement. That and the start of the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho are the best guarantees for changing the atmosphere and increasing the strength of those who support the peace process. As long as that does not happen, we will continue to live in tension, and the power of those who support violence might increase, which will be regretted.

[Zelinger] 'Arafat and his men are still hesitating and do not accept that compromise proposal. They are not taking the first step which will permit implementing the agreement.

[Al-Tibi] It is preferable to hesitate on fundamental national issues, it is preferable to think twice, it is preferable to make cool-headed decisions, and to reject bad proposals by the other side. That goes for both sides.

[Zelinger] You, of course, remember that at the end of the road you are looking forward to autonomy over most of the territory of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip.

[Al-Tibi] We are talking about a Gaza-Jericho First agreement and then a redeployment by the armed forces in the rest of the West Bank, which for some reason you insist on calling Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. The final target of that agreement for the Palestinians is to demand the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

[Zelinger] That is probably the problem. We talk about Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, and you talk about the occupied territories.

[Al-Tibi] Others talk about the West Bank and the occupied territories.

Sarid on al-Tibi Rejection of Agreement

TA3012120293 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Telephone interview with Environment Minister Yosi Sarid by Gid'on Zelinger—live]

[Excerpt] [Zelinger] I have just asked Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, and I will ask you: Was an agreement indeed reached in Cairo yesterday, and the last thing left is 'Arafat's signature? 'Arafat is still hesitating.

[Sarid] I heard Dr. al-Tibi. He was not there; I was. Therefore I want to tell you, in the clearest and most authoritative manner, that the understandings in question were accepted by the PLO leaders who attended the meeting, being in the same room with us on the same occasion. It is true that it was explicitly said, and it is clear, that the understandings are subject to the approval of both the Israeli prime minister and PLO leader 'Arafat. It is my understanding that the understandings, acceptable to the PLO leaders in attendance, are not acceptable to the PLO leader. Naturally, this is his prerogative. The question is whether he uses this prerogative wisely, but I will not be the judge of that.

[Zelinger] Dr. al-Tibi complained about leaks on our part, not theirs, and would not tell us exactly what is bothering the Palestinian side.

[Sarid] I will also not detail the things bothering the Israeli side, and there are quite a few such things. Having some experience in these matters, I can tell you that there has never been such a discreet Israeli delegation. There was no leak during the discussions.

[Zelinger] Could it be that the problem lies in is the original Oslo agreement? Why is it so difficult to translate the Oslo agreement into everyday language? What is the source of the constant misunderstandings?

[Sarid] I do not believe that the problem is in the Oslo agreement. Naturally, it is a very general agreement. It is a declaration of principles, that is all. Since I was not in Oslo, it would be easy for me to level criticism at those who were. I will not do that; furthermore, I complement them. There is this tendency here to believe that those who were not there could most certainly do the job better than those who were. I could not have conducted the negotiations any better. This is a general declaration of principles, and I assure you that if the parties remain faithful to the Oslo agreement, an arrangement will be found soon. The problem is that there is no absolute faithfulness.

[Zelinger] We are talking of an agreement which is a compromise attained after very long discussions. Would you say that Israel has reached the limit of concessions it can make, or are we to expect a further compromise? Will some rabbit be pulled out of the hat at the very last minute?

[Sarid] New ideas and new initiatives always come up. I am not certain, however, that I accept the term concessions. We were guided by two principles only. I have mentioned one: absolute faithfulness to previously signed agreements. If signed agreements are not adhered to, what is the point of reaching and signing additional agreements? The second principle is absolute commitment to Israel's security needs. Again, I wish to assure you and state most authoritatively that these two principles guided us and were very strictly observed. Therefore, there has been no deviation from the Oslo agreement, nor from our stand regarding Israel's security needs.

[Zelinger] I would like you to refer to the issue of the timetables that went wrong. Who do you believe has time on his side?

[Sarid] Time is working against both parties, and I believe the matter is even more urgent for the PLO because it is not in the area and, therefore, it has no influence over it for the time being. The PLO has yet to prove that it can enter the area, exert its influence on and control the territory. It seems to me that more often than not we deal with issues I believe to be relatively marginal. Life and reality are much stronger than this or that detail.

[Zelinger] I would also like to discuss maps with you. Three Israeli settlements—Na'aran, Yitav, and Elisha'—appear inside the autonomy boundaries. Am I correct?

[Sarid] In your introduction, you said you are going to speak to people who suddenly found themselves inside the autonomy. I do not know what they will say, but I can tell you that there is no need to hold that interview because not a single Jewish settlement will be found inside the Jericho-First area, nor in the Gaza-First area. You know that the government has pledged to the Knesset and the Israeli public that there will be no settlements inside the territory of Jericho or Gaza which is handed over to the Palestinians. This commitment was also strictly observed. There was not even the slightest deviation from this, not in Oslo, not in Versailles, and not in Cairo last week. [passage omitted]

Peres: Agreement Possible in 2-3 Weeks

TA2912200893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres believes an agreement with the PLO can be reached within two to three weeks. The foreign minister noted that the PLO leaders will now have to submit their answer to the joint declaration prepared by the Israeli and Palestinian delegations in the Cairo talks. The Israeli delegation returned to Israel this evening after completing its talks with the PLO delegation in Egypt.

Syria Reportedly Tells Jordan of Agreements With Israel

TA3012090493 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 30 Dec 93 p 2

[Report by Pinhas 'Inbari]

[Text] Syria has notified Jordan that, in fact, it has a wide range of understandings with Israel regarding the future arrangement. Foreign diplomatic sources in Israel told our correspondent that, during his recent visit to Jordan, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' reported that the Americans are very close to crystallizing a formula according to which the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will withdraw from the entire Golan Heights.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin had notified Syria, through the United States, that he will not remove settlements. This is the point of difference left between the two countries. It is assumed that the Golan settlers will not want to remain in place under Syrian sovereignty and will leave on their own accord.

Syria will notify the United States of its peace concept. Al- Shar' reported to Jordan's King Husayn that President al-Asad has decided to waive an Israeli declaration that it recognizes Syrian sovereignty over the Golan Heights or, alternatively, an Israeli announcement that it has no territorial demands of Syria—because he has no interest in this. The most important thing for him is that Israel pledge to withdraw from the Golan Heights.

According to the sources, during his visit to Amman, al-Shar' also discussed the possibility of Syria, Jordan, and Egypt playing a role in the negotiations on solving the Palestinian problem and not leaving the matter to the PLO alone. According to the Syrian concept, the current state of affairs is such that the PLO has reached agreements with Israel on the interim period—which allows the Arab countries to attain arrangements with Israel. Nevertheless, the Arab countries will resume playing an active role in representing the Palestinian problem in the discussions on the permanent arrangement.

Our correspondent notes that, judging from the harsh feelings against the PLO prevailing in Amman, al-Shar's remarks most probably met attentive ears.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Chief Views Arab Reconciliation

NC2912214493 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 26 Dec 93 p 3

[Interview with Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid by Sana' al-Sa'id; place and date not given]

[Text] [Al-Sa'id] In March 1993, you submitted an initiative for Arab reconciliation. With the advent of 1994, I wonder whether matters can proceed toward achieving the reconciliation by calling on Iraq to clearly acknowledge, through a declaration of good intent, Kuwait as an independent sovereign state so that we can overcome the crisis of disintegration and achieve reconciliation?

['Abd-al-Majid] Together with my reconciliation initiative, I addressed messages to all Arab leaders and I urged them to embark on a heart-to-heart talk as a path toward achieving reconciliation. This was approved by a majority of the Arab foreign ministers during their meeting at the Arab League headquarters on 18 April. I sensed then that I touched on a sensitive point with the Arab leaders.

[Al-Sa'id] What prevents you from resubmitting the proposal concerning Iraq which was the basis of the crisis with Kuwait in order to resolve the dispute and restore amity within the Arab ranks?

['Abd-al-Majid] We did not confine our mission to addressing Iraq alone. Rather, we urged all the Arab countries to respect the sovereignty and independence of each state, because what happened in August 1990 was a violation of this sovereignty. What we are trying to do these days is to contain what happened in August 1990. We are trying to learn from the past how to avoid making the same mistakes again.

[Al-Sa'id] So far, 13 Arab countries have approved the reconciliation initiative. I wonder whether it is possible to convene an Arab summit with this number to pave the way to attract the rejectionists later?

['Abd-al-Majid] No doubt, the acceptance of 13 states represents the first main step toward promoting the reconciliation process. When I proposed the initiative I thought it was difficult but not impossible. The general situation in the Arab world needs reconciliation, solidarity, and purification of the Arab atmosphere. But I do not think that convening an Arab summit with only 13 states is a practical solution. Rather, it will consolidate Arab division and it will be harmful rather than useful. Accordingly, we hope to achieve progress through our method and contacts. My latest humble move involved the issue of prisoners when we dispatched an envoy to the Iraqi Government a few days ago. We are proceeding along the right path though slowly because the issue is difficult.

[Al-Sa'id] Where are we as an Arab world amid the economic blocs in the world? We have the European Market and East Asia. All these groups should prompt us to focus on economic principles, particularly since the Middle East market is emerging and it is feared that this could destroy the old Arab dream of achieving Arab economic unity?

['Abd-al-Majid] The blocs that emerge in the world are built on common interests, not on emotions, history, or imagination. The Arab world is currently facing a challenge. But the Arab world is also full of capabilities and resources and these have not been utilized properly. It is expected that during the next stage certain powers from outside the Arab world might dominate us through the so-called Middle East market. However, this should not scare us. What is required is not to confront it, but to cooperate with it from a position of power and from the perspective that we can dictate our views to achieve our Arab interests. But the talk that the Arab world could be devoured within Middle East organizations made up of countries that are close to us geographically cannot happen and cannot be accepted by the Arab world.

[Al-Sa'id] Is Arab economic unity possible?

['Abd-al-Majid] Arab unity is too big, too serious, and too difficult a term to use. The alternative is for the Arab states to integrate their economies, not to unite. Integration means that if the individual interests of any Arab state conflict with the pan-Arab interests of the Arab states, individual interests will take precedence. This is because it is inconceivable for any state to abandon its interests in favor of another country, even if it is Arab. I urge all the Arab brothers to ponder the next stage, because it is one fraught with challenges; one that involves both opportunities and risks. What is required is to seize the opportunities to serve our interests and face the risks to try to avoid any harm that may result from them. But we must never take the Arab world as an uncontested matter, and we must never assume that Israel could dominate this Arab world. If this is what Israel thinks, then it is no doubt living a big illusion. Today we are on the threshold of an era of peace, and we must first fulfill our pan-Arab and national interests and the interests of each individual Arab state in its resources and wealth. After that, we could go beyond the Arab scope to the non-Arab scope, whether this involves cooperation with Israel or others.

[Al-Sa'id] Has the Gaza-Jericho declaration given momentum to the peace process or did it not have anything new to add?

['Abd-al-Majid] I believe it has helped promote the peace process despite all the difficulties involved. It is clear that all parties want peace, even Israel, which has an interest in peace.

[Al-Sa'id] But it wants it on its own terms?

['Abd-al-Majid] Yes, and sometimes it says that it is offering peace as a gift to the Arabs, which is a mistake because peace is in its own interest before it is in the interest of the Arabs. It is totally unreasonable for Israel to think it is being generous by making peace with the Arab world. Israel is occupying Arab territory and is not recognizing Arab rights, particularly the rights of the Palestinian people. So, first it must recognize that we have legitimate and internationally established rights that are recognized by the United Nations and that we must obtain. We have always stated that the settlements represent an obstacle to peace, and this is proved today to everybody. Therefore, this obstacle must be eliminated!

[Al-Sa'id] Does this mean that they must be included in the withdrawal?

['Abd-al-Majid] Yes, the withdrawal has to be full withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied by civilian or military personnel and from all settlements. We must all demand a comprehensive, not a lame, peace. The peace we want is one that secures the Arab states' full control over their territories and recognizes the legitimate and national rights of the Palestinian people.

[Al-Sa'id] What about the United States' theories of superiority and its constant inclination to keep Israel as a nuclear deterrent in the region based on the claim of maintaining its interests and the interests of its allied state?

['Abd-al-Majid] I do not know who keeps Israel as a nuclear deterrent to impose itself on the region, but if this is the U.S. policy, I do not think it will serve its purpose, because this makes a serious disturbance of the balance in the region. Moreover, this does not serve the interests of any country in the region. In addition, we must never talk about military supremacy because military solutions are no longer feasible. What is prevalent today are peaceful tendencies. The policies of domination and racial discrimination are over and obsolete, and South Africa is the best proof of this. After centuries of apartheid rule, it will come to an end, God willing, on 4 April. Despite its nuclear capability and military domination, South Africa could not suppress the national and popular revolt in the country.

Transport, Communications Ministers Meet in Cairo

Conference Agenda Detailed

NC2912123293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1102 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—The ninth session of the Arab Transport and Communications Ministers Council, chaired by Saudi Communications Minister Husayn al-Mansuri, opened at the Arab League General Secretariat today.

The conferees are discussing ways to promote Arab cooperation in transport and communications, the ratification of the unified Arab trip ticket, support for the Maritime Transport Academy, and the completion of overland routes and railway networks between Arab countries. The meeting will also deal with establishing a data base for transport and communications and for developing human resources in this area. [passage omitted]

Ministers Issue Resolutions

NC2912173693 Cairo MENA in English 1510 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, Dec 29 (MENA)—Arab ministers of transport and communications today ratified a unified Arab traffic regulations code on organising individuals and vehicles access to the Arab states.

The ministers called at the end of their ninth session for completing a railway network linking Arab countries.

The Arab Ministers Council endorsed the Egyptian paper on developing human resources in the transport domain and holding training sessions in the field.

Envoy Discusses Libya Embargo Effects

NC2912202793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1542 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—Ahmad 'Abdallah Jum'ah, deputy secretary of the Libyan People's Committee for Transport and Communication, has stated that the resolution imposing an air embargo on Libya, issued by the Security Council after the Lockerbie crisis, has greatly affected the transportation and communications sector of Libya. It has destroyed the basic structure of this sector.

Jum'ah, who is heading his country's delegation to the meetings of the Arab transport ministers that started in Cairo today, pointed out that the losses of this sector since the resolution was issued are difficult to estimate. He clarified that the primary numbers for the Libyan airline losses are estimated at around $600 million, in addition to losses for the light transport airline companies and air cargo, which amount to around another $200 million.

The Libyan official clarified in statements he made today on the sidelines of the Arab transport ministers' meetings that his country's move to concentrate on naval transport is an attempt to decrease the effects of the air embargo on it. This move is costing Libya around $35 million to buy and rent naval vessels.

He noted that Libya also depends on land routes to deal with this embargo, which has placed even greater burdens on his country. They have raised fuel consumption and the need for vehicles, in addition to increasing accidents.

On the other hand, the Libyan official affirmed that starting the implementation of the new line between al-Sallum in Egypt and Tobruk in Libya depends on when the specialized technical committees will finish this project. He pointed out that the line is 170 km long and costs $450 million.

Palestinian Affairs

'Abd-al-Shafi on Mission of Gaza Delegation

JN2912124493 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1045 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Interview with Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi by 'Umar Zaydani carried within the "With the Midday Events" program; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Zaydani] Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, you will lead a delegation from the Gaza Strip to Tunis to discuss the Fatah resignations in the Strip. Are you also going to discuss the subject of coordination, which does not seem to be as it should between you and the PLO leadership?

['Abd-al-Shafi] First of all, the delegation will be from the occupied territories and from outside, and we will not discuss the Fatah resignations because this is not our concern. We will discuss the current situation and the current challenge concerning the Declaration of Principles, and the negotiating ability this situation requires, especially concerning the challenge represented in administering our affairs in the fields where authority will be transferred to the Palestinians.

[Zaydani] Does this mean that you are forming a Palestinian opposition to the agreement and that you are not satisfied with the Declaration of Principles?

['Abd-al-Shafi] No, some delegation members support the agreement and others have reservations. At present, we are concerned with the quality of the Palestinian performance in the negotiations and with selecting efficient people to shoulder the responsibilities of running the Palestinian civil affairs.

[Zaydani] You mean the PLO not imposing people without consulting with you?

['Abd-al-Shafi] Consulting with us is, in fact, a term that should be defined. We think that a decision concerning this challenge facing the Palestinian people should be adopted by a collective leadership. We want to broaden the base of the Palestinian decisionmaking process.

[Zaydani] You spoke about collective decisionmaking and collective leadership several months ago. Hasn't this been received with a deaf ear by PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat since you met with him several times on this subject?

['Abd-al-Shafi] In fact, I did not meet with 'Arafat since the signing of the agreement. It is true that I spoke about this months ago, and we presented a memorandum on this subject to 'Arafat. Now he wants to discuss the memorandum and its contents with representatives of those who signed it.

[Zaydani] Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, the negotiating Palestinian team which you lead is absent from the negotiations between Israel and the PLO in Oslo, Paris, and now in Cairo. Does this absence have any meaning?

['Abd-al-Shafi] No, not at all. I said previously when asked about this subject that I considered the mission of the negotiating delegation to Washington over as soon as the agreement on the Declaration of Principles was announced. The leadership has not decided any measures concerning the delegation, so I considered the delegation's mission, as assigned in the Washington negotiations, to be over.

[Zaydani] But the negotiations are taking place on Gaza-Jericho First, and it is noted that there are no representatives of the territories except Jamil al-Tarifi?

['Abd-al-Shafi] That is right, perhaps this issue is not acceptable by many Palestinian quarters. We do not discriminate between the Palestinians inside and outside the territories. In my opinion, what is needed is to find the efficient Palestinians, whether from inside or outside the territories. [Zaydani] Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, thank you very much.

['Abd-al-Shafi] Thank you.

Executive Committee: Israel 'Hampering' Talks

NC2912150693 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1355 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Tunis, 29 Dec (MENA)—The PLO Executive Committee has affirmed its insistence on guaranteeing the Palestinian people's right to fully supervise crossings to the areas from which the Israeli army will withdraw and to participate in supervising crossings to other areas, and affirms its readiness to do the needed coordination between the two sides through international participation.

The Executive Committee issued a statement after a meeting it held today under the chairmanship of Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat to evaluate the results of the current talks in Cairo within the framework of the Palestinian-Israeli Liaison Committee. It said that it holds the Israeli side responsible for hampering the current negotiations and failing to adhere to the agreed dates for starting Israeli withdrawal from these regions and finalizing this withdrawal by 13 April [1994].

The PLO Executive Committee clarified in its statement that the Israeli stand has retreated from its previous positions presented in Oslo, Paris, and Tunis.

The committee said that the Israeli side has reverted to its previous position of clinging to full control and supervision of all crossings and bridges leading to the Gaza Strip and Jericho. According to the Declaration of Principles signed by the two sides, the Israeli army is to withdraw from these two areas.

It clarified that the Israeli adherence to this stand turns the withdrawal into a mere re-deployment of the Israeli forces in these areas and strips it of any significance.

Broadcast Warns Settlers: Death or Departure

JN2812174493 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 23 Dec 93

[Palestine Broadcast: "Talk of the Return" by Fayiz Qandil]

[Text] Brother strugglers: Palestinian Arab bullets yesterday executed two Zionist, subversive parasites—so-called settlers. Our use of the adjective so-called is because they are far from being pacifist settlers. They are veritable destroyers of another people's homeland. The two criminal saboteurs were executed in Baytuniya in the Ramallah district. As expected, Israel subsequently terrorized the Ramallah area, making arrests, vandalizing Palestinian property, and placing the district under a curfew.

Two fundamental facts are worth noting here: First, whatever terror tactics the Israelis may apply shall fail to browbeat the Palestinian Arab people or their fighters. Second, no Israeli crime shall go unpunished—whether the crime in question is committed by the occupation army or by the saboteurs, otherwise characterized as settlers. Yesterday's execution of the two Zionist saboteurs followed a wave of Israeli terror and threats to commit further such acts.

The failure of Israel's psychological war lies in the fact that it is aimed at Palestinian men and women who crave martyrdom for their homeland, no less than Zionists seek life on the ruins of the homeland of others. No psychological war will work against such Arab youths, a fact borne out by the attack on the two Israeli saboteurs' car in Baytuniya. This means that Israeli terror may kill and vandalize and poison Arab life, but certainly will not bully the Arabs, who, even in the darkest moments of Israeli occupation, see freedom on the horizon of an Arab Palestine. Not one Israeli crime will go unpunished by Palestinian Arabs, again as borne out by the Baytuniya attack.

Under the protection of the wolves of the occupation army, the Zionist subversive parasites descended on Ramallah and broke into and confiscated a number of the homes of Arabs—the legitimate people of this homeland. However, our heroic folks decided to stay put in their homes and to endure the presence of these Israeli flies, no matter what. The execution took place in Ramallah yesterday, practically in the same spot—in Baytuniya—several hours after the Zionists seized Arab homes. It may be that these two belonged to that filthy gang that seized the Arab homes.

The rest of the black comedy is well known and predictable. The Zionist saboteurs, characterized as settlers, gathered in Ramallah under the protection of the occupation army that had imposed a curfew. They must have shouted their notorious and idiotic slogan: Death to the Arabs. It is high time these criminals understood that, as believers in God, Arabs couldn't care less about such threats. The death threats are thus pointless. The Zionists can shout such slogans for as long as they would, since this will not make a difference in their unavoidable fate, which is their departure from this Palestinian Arab land. Arab strugglers have grasped the significance of this slogan sufficiently to train their guns on the invading and subversive parasites to teach them through the nozzle of the gun that they have either of two choices—either get killed or clear out.

Algeria

Ali Kafi Views Economic Strategy for 1994

LD3012090793 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] At the meeting of the council of ministers, Higher State Council Chairman Ali Kafi made a speech in which he lauded the efforts made to prepare programs likely to correct the major disequilibriums so as to restructure our industrial production enterprises, continue the financial clean up, issue the new investment law, and resume contacts with the International Monetary Fund to find the appropriate remedy for our foreign debt.

Ali Kafi praised the efforts of the government which has presented the 1994 budget, a budget marked by an improvement in comparison with the problems it witnessed in 1993. The 1994 financial deficit is expected to be reduced to 9.2 percent of the Gross Dometic Product instead of 17.4 percent for 1993. This deficit cut is due to an improvement in imports and the severity applied in managing the budget. Ali Kafi added that the 1994 budget gives back to the tax sector its function of encouraging the economy.

Concerning the customs and excise fees, national production is protected by adequate customs fees. The 1994 budget expects also the establishing of a loan insurance system and also encouragement of exports other than hydrocarbons. Finally, Ali Kafi urged the government to see to it that these measures are carried out, and he affirmed that the social partners—workers and economic operators—must unite their efforts to get our economy out of stagnation, guarantee the continuity of our institutions, and bring back credibility to the state.

Council of Ministers Endorses 1994 Financial Bill

LD2912220893 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] The Council of Ministers chaired by Mr. Ali Kafi, chairman of the Higher State Council, today approved the financial bill for 1994. It includes a number of measures that seek to adapt tax collection to economic reality through the introduction of more flexibility and transparency on the transfer of real estate property by reviewing the provisions of registration, trade transactions, and inheritance rights, as well as the tax levied on the value of the real estate. The financial bill also seeks to reduce taxes on company profits from 42 percent to 38 percent, and to reduce the VAT rate within the hotel and taxi business and on the extraction of raw coral. It also rectifies some tariffs and establishes the loan guarantee system in exports and provides incentives in the field of savings.

The financial bill also includes new provisions relating to imports without payment by returning the goods to their original state, specifies the rules for importing new cars or cars less than three years old by exempting them from the formalities of foreign trade control and paying for them through a hard currency account opened with an Algerian bank.

To support the capabilities of the local communities, it has been decided to apply the property tax on agricultural properties.

The financial bill also seeks to assess the revenues of public properties and according to the bill the state will directly intervene in financing social housing programs. It will create special treasury accounts to meet the consequences resulting from dissolving dependent national and regional public institutions and to meet the state's domestic and international obligations. The state will shoulder the responsibility for the losses of the private sector institutions as a result of foreign exchange in the field of foreign loans.

There are social measures in the new financial bill for the benefit of the injured, the handicapped, and the elderly.

We will come back with more details and analysis of this bill in our coming news bulletins.

Minister Explains Bill

LD2912230193 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Excerpt] Today we interviewed Economy Minister Mourad Benachnou on the most important topics of the 1994 financial bill signed today. Here is the minister's reply to a question concerning the main principles of this bill:

[Begin Benachnou recording] The main principles are ... [pauses] the first principle which is the most important, is putting forward the basis for reviving the national economy through taxation and other financial measures.

The second principle is social security because there is no bill that cannot take into consideration the social problems from which our society is suffering and especially the problem of unemployment. There are some measures which will create work opportunities.

The third principle, which is very important, is restoring the balance between state revenues and expenditures. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Interior Minister Views Algeria's Economic Crisis

LD2512233493 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 25 Dec 93

[Report by Nassira Bouzid on discussion by Selim Saadi, minister of interior and local communities, at a working meeting on the Algerian economy in Tlemcen Province; date not given]

[Text] At the beginning of the meeting in which the governors of Tlemcen, Mostaganem, and Ain Temouchent, and heads of department and local municipal officials took part, Interior Minister Selim Saadi discussed the current situation in the country. After providing an in-depth analysis of the current crisis, he dealt at length with the main causes leading to the break-up of authority and the loss of the Algerian state institutions' credibility. According to the minister, the situation is due to a failure in management by irresponsible people with no patriotic feeling who had taken over the running of the country's affairs but left room for chaos and improvisation.

On dealing with the economic and social aspect, the minister provided an analysis of the various stages that have characterized the country's economic development. In this context, he noted the break-up and lack of control in the running of the country's economic affairs, which had made it suffer from the burden of indebtedness that accumulated in the last decade. According to Selim Saadi, this situation is due to the lack of effectiveness and perception in dealing with the problem of indebtedness.

He said that the officials during that period resorted to short-term debts in order to meet debts, until Algeria got into a difficult position in 1993 which made it necessary for it to increase its revenues in order to meet only the payment of debts.

Turning to the political situation, Mr. Selim Saadi asserted the need to remain with the democratic process in our country, pointing out that it would not be possible to imagine a democratic state without a strong state with stable institutions in order to guarantee the continuity of the state and its protection from all irresponsible and dangerous political deviations.

Proceeding from this, the minister insisted on the need to rebuild the state and consolidate its basic structures, including local authority structures, which he announced would be reorganized soon. He said that such an exercise, which is currently under consideration, would be focusing upon standards of effectiveness and rationalization, which are used worldwide, and not upon political expediency as before.

The minister of interior and localities also said that history would condemn those who remained silent when ugly crimes were being committed against innocent citizens, public officers, and foreigners, who were taking part in the development of the country.

Mr. Selim Saadi added that not reporting acts of sabotage against economic and cultural installations, which had been realised in Algeria with great sacrifices, should be viewed as treason which cannot be forgiven by the rising generation. The political game, being played by some people at a time when the country needs the mobilization of active forces, would end in failure.

Hamas Leader Views Current Domestic Situation

JN2212215193 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 20 Dec 93 p 4

[Telephone interview with Mahfoud Nahnah, leader of the Islamic Society movement, Hamas, by 'Abdallah al-Hajj in Jeddah; date not given]

[Text] [Al-Hajj] What is the position of Hamas on the current situation in Algeria?

[Nahnah] Our movement believes in, and works for, a genuine, comprehensive, and profound dialogue. Any party considered as a figure in the equation of intensification and resolution [of the Algerian situation] should not be excluded from such a dialogue.

We, and others, demanded the current authorities provide an atmosphere for dialogue and make concessions to confirm their seriousness about working for a solution. The government responded by taking some measures. We still demand that the government takes more measures.

[Al-Hajj] Do you believe the conditions set by the Islamic Salvation Front to resume dialogue with the authorities can be acceptable under the current circumstances?

[Nahnah] We are among those who are working to make such a dialogue an Algerian one, in terms of its place, parties, and authorities. We do not allow any form of foreign interference. We do not believe any Algerian who respects his religion, people, and history can accept foreign interference.

From this premise, the Islamic front comprises various parties that may converge on some terms and differ on other terms. What is important, however, is to agree on the principle of dialogue and be ready to offer concessions. It is noteworthy that the dialogue's future depends not only on the authorities but also on all political partners, otherwise, it would be treason, which, we think, the current authorities would not accept.

We stressed the need to make even the armed groups participate in a peaceful solution because these groups are an important party, a figure in the crisis. They cannot be circumvented or ignored. It goes without saying that arms should be laid down, that a truce should be declared, and that a meeting between the various parties be held in a spirit of making concessions in favor of the nation, the homeland, and the sparing of blood. It is inconceivable for the Salvation Front to be a subject for bargaining or outbidding by others at a time when hundreds of thousands of its supporters are alive.

It is equally inconceivable for the Algerians to be unable to find common denominators by which they can resolve their disputes by themselves, so they will not be targeted by foreign statements that foment sedition and defame Algeria.

[Al-Hajj] What is the movement's position on the attacks against foreigners?

[Nahnah] We denounce all attacks, assassinations, and kidnappings that deprive man of his right to life, whether this man is an Algerian or a foreign resident who came to Algeria to cooperate and contribute to the country's development. We wonder and ask scholars and clergymen, who have living and pure consciences, to define their positions on those who shed blood, pursue corruption, and destroy achievements.

Islam is innocent of those who shed blood, kill people, shake stability, and kidnap reformists and scholars, as happened with His Eminence Muhammad Bu-Sulaymani [name as published], as well as those who target the intellectuals, men of literature, media men, reporters, security officers, and civilians and those who starve the people and assassinate foreigners in order to isolate Algeria from the international order.

[Al-Hajj] As the tenure of the Higher State Council is about to end, what is the formula by which the country should be ruled in your opinion?

[Nahnah] The council's tenure expires at the end of 1993. After that, it should be out of office, provided it is succeeded by a collective presidential commission that respects itself and its people's value and believes in assuming power in turns. Such a commision should also announce, just as the current council has done, when its tenure will expire. Its tenure should be short and its objectives clear, avoiding playing for time or a desire for control. Thus, it is necessary to bring in a respectable presidential commission, if it is difficult to hold presidential elections that can contribute to defusing the conflict among the brothers in the one homeland.

[Al-Hajj] Do you believe releasing the Islamic Front's leaders, led by Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, would defuse an explosion?

[Nahnah] We demand that courageous decisions and measures be taken in order to restore stability and security and spare our people's blood. We believe that releasing the Islamic Front's leaders is up to the judicial and political authorities which are supposed to enjoy tolerance and justice, especially since the country is on the verge of a volcano. Releasing Madani and Belhadj will ease the security crisis. However, such a release will not completely end this crisis.

Egypt

'Terrorists' Reportedly Penetrate Security System

NC3012084393 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 27 Dec 93 p 7

[Report from Asyut by 'Isam 'Abd-al-Jawad]

[Text] Terrorist groups have infiltrated the Asyut Security Directorate's information system. The evidence emerged in incidents last Sunday [19 December] and Monday in which 14 people were killed and 20 wounded during the biggest terrorist operation in Asyut since the October 1981 incidents [in which Islamists tried to seize power following the assassination of al-Sadat].

News circulating recently in Asyut confirms that the terrorist groups have infiltrated the information system that details the movements of security leaders within the governorate. The groups learned the times these leaders report for work despite constant changes to their routes and the color and model of the cars they use. They also learned that some leaders use cars without license plates for camouflage.

The news was confirmed by officials, who explained that by obtaining the security information, terrorist groups "avenged" the death of their amir [leader] in Manfalut in just 90 minutes by assassinating Brigadier General Muhammad Tu'aymah and his guard. The security agencies have denied any link between the two incidents. The "Islamic Group" established the link in a statement that confirmed Brig. Gen. Tu'ayumah was assassinated in response to the killing of the Manfalut Islamic Group leader.

Recent incidents have revealed a serious development in terrorist operations in Asyut. Plastic incendiary hand grenades were used for the first time in addition to the incendiary, penetrating bullets—the use and circulation of which is prohibited among citizens.

Security sources have told ROSE AL-YUSUF that the security apparatus has arrested 150 terrorists in the past few days. They are being interrogated for referral to the State Security Prosecution.

Elsewhere, the Interior Ministry has sent a group of high-ranking security leaders [to Asyut] to work out a new plan to terminate terrorist operations there and overcome the shortcomings affecting the information system of the Asyut Security Directorate.

Policeman, 'Terrorist' Killed in Search Operation

NC2912211893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2045 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Asyut, 29 Dec (MENA)—An operation to search for terrorists conducted by security forces on al-Badari island in Asyut has left policeman Rikab al-'Awni Nur and terrorist Salah Muhammad 'Atiyah dead and citizen Mustafa Amal Ahmad wounded.

A responsible security source has stated that a number of suspected terrorists were arrested in possession of weapons and ammunition. The al-Badari prosecutor has begun an investigation.

Writer's Assassins Receive Death Penalty, Prison

NC3012111893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1045 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, 30 Dec (MENA)—The Supreme State Security Court—Emergency today passed sentence in the case of the assassination of writer Dr. Faraj Fudah. It issued the death sentence against 'Ali 'Abd-al-Shafi Ahmad Ramadan and Ashraf al-Sayyid Ibrahim, who was executed earlier for attempting to assassinate Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif.

The court sentenced Abu-al-'Ula Muhammad 'Abd-Rabbuh to 15 years with hard labor and fugitives 'Ali Hasan 'Ali and Basim Muhammad Khalil Shahin to 10 years with hard labor and three years imprisonment respectively.

The court acquitted eight defendants: Safwat 'Abd-al-Ghani, Mansur Ahmad Mansur, Muhammad Ibrahim 'Abd-al-Hamid, Muhammad 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Abd-al-Wahid, Ashraf Muhammad 'Abd-al-Rahman, Jalal Mahmud, Hasan 'Ali Mahmud, and Walid Hasan Kamil. [passage omitted]

Foreign Minister on Peace, Current Issues

JN2812075293 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 25 Dec 93 p 5

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by 'Amr 'Abd-al-Sami' in Cairo; date not given]

[Text] ['Abd-al-Sami'] How do you evaluate the prospects of the Palestinian-Israeli peace now that the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho failed to materialize on 13 December? What about Prime Minister Rabin's statement that there is nothing to ensure that the withdrawal would be completed on 13 April, as scheduled, and his assertion that there is no sacred deadline?

[Musa] Pompous phrases like a "sacred deadline" or a "nonsacred deadline" are perhaps used for general consumption, but it is both necessary and important to respect agreed deadlines. If there are difficulties or complications in the agreement and its provisions leading to postponing the beginning of the withdrawal, then the withdrawal measures should be accelerated so that the withdrawal would be completed on time. Moreover, the future of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement is not confined to the issue of Gaza and Jericho. We are dealing with a declaration of principles; that is, opening the way for a first step, a second step, a third step to reach the final situation or the settlement whose basis must be the Palestinian people's right of self-determination.

If we succeed in the first step, even by 70 percent, let us build on it to promote the second step. The final aim will continue to be self-determination along with Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian territories.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Do you expect that the al-Asad-Clinton summit next month will help push the Syrian-Israeli negotiations forward? Do you believe that the Rabin government is prepared to wage a new internal battle with the opposition on the agreement with Syria before implementing the agreement with the PLO?

[Musa] The Clinton-al-Asad meeting will be extremely important. It will push the peace talks on the Syrian-Israeli track forward. The complicated point on this track is well known.

For us, the Syrian position is clear; namely, everything in exchange for everything. Much has been written in this regard concerning details such as Israel's recognition of Syria's sovereignty over the Golan and stopping the application of Israeli laws in the occupied Syrian territory.

Egypt's constant stand on this issue is that what was applied to Sinai should also be applied to the Golan. This means that there should be full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan. This means ending the Israeli presence in exchange for peaceful relations. As to how this will be realized and in what timeframe, this is subject to an agreement between the two sides.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Do you think that Syria will accept a phased withdrawal over 10 years, for example?

[Musa] There has been much talk on the time frame during which the withdrawal could be completed. The length or shortness of time frames is a relative matter. However, I do not deem it wise on my part to comment on this issue, because it is one that concerns only Syria and Israel. Whatever arrangements they may agree on is their own business. Hence, I decline to address details regarding this issue.

['Abd-al-Sami'] However, there are details you may choose to address. These details concern the relationship between the Syrian track and the Lebanese track; that is, the linkage or disengagement between the two tracks. Which status does Egypt feel is beneficial for the peace process?

[Musa] The issue has nothing to do with an identity of views or a disengagement of tracks. It must be said that there is a linkage between the two tracks. This linkage does not negate the independence of both tracks.

The Lebanese are responsible for the Lebanese track, which is taken care of by the Lebanese Government. It is the Lebanese people who may accept or reject any proposals in this regard. There is no denying that the Lebanese-Syrian relationship is governed by many factors, the least important of which are practical. Hence, any progress on the Syrian-Israeli track is bound to facilitate progress on the Israeli-Lebanese track.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Of late, observers have seen difficulties hindering the resumption of the Jordanian-Palestinian coordination after Jordan and the Palestinians signed agreements with Israel, notwithstanding the differences between these two agreements. Some fear that each side might coordinate with Israel at the expense of the other side—something which might harm them both, and perhaps some other Arab sides. Do you have any ideas how the difficulties facing the Jordanian-Palestinian coordination may be addressed, particularly in the aftermath of improved ties between Cairo and Amman?

[Musa] Coordination between the Palestinians and Jordan is necessary. In the same vein, coordination between Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians is necessary, and will occur more frequently. It is extremely important for the three Arab sides whose territories are occupied, and which are seeking to liberate these territories to coordinate closely among themselves.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Which issues did the overall agreements address?

[Musa] The entire future. For a Palestinian entity will emerge in the region. Hence, the Palestinians must decide their policies with regard to dialogue and cooperation with Egypt and Jordan. As far as we are concerned, we must be ready to extend our assistance. Consequently, I trust that with the emergence of a Palestinian entity in Gaza and Jericho, the Palestinians will formulate certain policies regarding their ties with both Jordan and Egypt. Of course, this will reflect their perspective regarding these ties.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Some observers believe the PLO is still not ready to assume authority in the occupied territories. What do you think of this and of Palestinian criticism and complaints about the PLO leadership's policy? Will this have any effect on future stability in the Gaza Strip in particular?

[Musa] Naturally, we should not rule out gaps in Palestinian preparedness. This is the first time a political organization mainly engaged in rhetoric or in giving instructions from abroad is going to assume direct responsibility for electricity, education, and police on the ground.

There may be experts in all these fields, and there may not be, but this will not affect the general picture. The Palestinians can do it, and they can do it well. We will offer them any assistance they may need in any field.

['Abd-al-Sami'] The public announcement of the Gaza-Jericho agreement accompanied efforts by many private and official organizations in the Arab world to normalize relations with Israel. Is there any official Egyptian efforts to activate normalization with Israel to add some dynamism to the peace process?

[Musa] These things happen naturally or at one's own initiative. We have no legal or political restrictions regarding normalization with Israel. Anyway, this question should be viewed differently.

If Israel is willing to give back the territories and achieve a settlement acceptable to the Palestinians, then why should there be any obstacle to us or to others. The Palestine question is the core of the Middle East problem. So if the Palestinians choose to engage in a search for a settlement, then the major reason is no more. We are also greatly concerned about the Syrian and Lebanese dimensions. Suppose all these problems were settled, then why not.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Is there any linkage between scheduling normalization, so to speak, and progress in the peace process?

[Musa] Naturally. If no Israeli withdrawal from Syrian territory takes places, then there will be no normalization between Israel and Syria. In addition, if there is no honest implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement, then no one will seek progress in normalization.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Two months ago, I asked you about the future of the Arab League and you told me that this is a puzzling question and that you are thinking a lot about it. Have you reached any conclusions in light of the new arrangements for the Middle East?

[Musa] The question is still puzzling and complicated. It might take another two months (Musa laughs), but we must talk about it. The Arab bond has been greatly affected by the split in the Arab body. The patient is still recuperating, but I assure you this will not last long.

In addition, you cannot talk about normalizing Arab relations while one Arab state does not recognize another. This presents us with a very tense situation. It is not a matter of disputed rights or territory. Iraq does not recognize at all the State of Kuwait.

This problem has to be addressed. There can be no normal Arab ties under this situation. If this situation persists, then the Kuwaitis have the right to have fears and be nervous and apprehensive about any reconciliation with Iraq. This is a key issue in redressing the Arab situation.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Is there no other way to redress the Arab situation? I mean adhering to the general principles agreed on by the Arabs. The Arab foreign ministers agreed in September 1992 not to join the treaty banning weapons of mass destruction until Israel adheres to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, but afterward some parties broke this agreement. How strong is the Arab bond?

[Musa] Here, there is a question mark about Arab coordination. It is enough that Egypt, Syria, and Jordan are committed to this decision. We take this stand in the name of all Arabs, whether some of us have signed or not. This is a stand taken for Arab and regional national security. This security will not be safeguarded as long as Israel is accorded special treatment. This will create conflicts and disputes in the short or long run.

This issue should be given special attention to confirm eventually that superpowers do not discriminate between other nations. Israel has refused to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and we have refused to join the Chemical Nonproliferation Treaty. This issue should be resolved. Otherwise, agreements will remain incomplete.

['Abd-al-Sami'] There are also factors of national and regional security in the Horn of Africa. Iran and Sudan have been accused of meddling in this region to support General Aidid's faction. Given the failure of the recent conference in Ethiopia under the Ethiopian president, what is Egypt going to do to protect its national and regional security?

[Musa] The Horn of Africa is not separate from the Middle East. Any tension or threat to security there will affect the entire region.

We have historical relations with all east African nations (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti). The Organization of African Unity, currently chaired by President Mubarak, has authorized the Ethiopian president to go ahead with his efforts to achieve reconciliation between Somali factions. These factions held a conference last March and some sort of cease-fire was reached, but the conference did not succeed.

Another meeting took place in Addis Ababa. The meeting did not fail but it weakened the question of reconciliation. A third meeting is expected. Egypt agrees with the Ethiopian president on the following points:

1. Cease-fire and disarmament. If any faction keeps its weapons, then any tension will lead to fresh clashes.

2. National reconciliation that includes everybody. We do not exclude Gen. Aidid. Everybody is equal and there should be no discrimination between any two people.

3. Establishing the state, that is, forming the regions. Many parts of Somalia are now quiet. There has been progress indeed. The United Nations has succeeded in Somalia. Many regions started to produce crops and there is no longer any famine. In other regions of Somalia, they are now building posts offices and police headquarters. Perhaps this excludes Mogadishu.

4. The reconstruction of Somalia, which depends on reconciliation and the restoration of calmness.

We do not like to be asked to—or see others—impose a particular person or faction in Somalia, because the process must be completely democratic, allowing the Somalis to choose who they want. Any attempt to impose a particular person or faction will take us back to square one, which others do not accept and which will lead to confrontation again.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Is there any Egyptian activity in this framework?

[Musa] Yes, through the Organization of African Unity.

['Abd-al-Sami'] How?

[Musa] By showing interest within the organization to lead this action, taking into consideration that the Ethiopian president has an authorization in this regard. Egypt has attended all conferences of reconciliation. However, its main policy remains that all the Somali people should take part in finding a solution. The Somalis should help themselves by making a free choice because what happened in Somalia is their mistake, and not that of others.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Egyptian-Libyan relations have witnessed noticeable progress through the Egyptian mediation in the Lockerbie crisis. However, it seems these relations are now facing a crisis due to the disappearance of the Libyan opposition figure Mansur al-Kikhya. How do you assess Egyptian-Libyan relations after this incident?

[Musa] This issue is very regrettable. Mansur al-Kikhya is a respectable man and his disappearance is regrettable. If a conspiracy against his life is proven, we would consider this an unacceptable and illegitimate act and Egypt would adopt a position accordingly.

However, so far we have no evidence to accuse anybody. We are following this issue with great interest, because it is unacceptable that brother Mansur al-Kikhya or any other Libyan brother in Egypt should be kidnapped, since this will be directed against Egypt and its honor. I cannot at this point make any accusations until we know what really happened.

['Abd-al-Sami'] But it could be a long time before finding out what exactly has happened. We know that Imam Musa al-Sadr was kidnapped a long time ago, but no one has exactly found out what happened to him or who was responsible.

[Musa] People in Egypt have this opinion and many others share their view, but we hope that al-Kikhya's fate will not be the same as that of Musa al-Sadr.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Is there any evidence or information in this regard?

[Musa] No.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Apparently, Egypt's relations with Sudan have witnessed no progress, nor have they deteriorated. What course do you expect these relations to take, especially since you are planning to visit Khartoum?

[Musa] Our relations with Sudan are not well and are fraught with much tension, but have not deteriorated. Just as serious, is the way Sudan and its policies are perceived in the Arab and African world. This perception causes us to have misgivings about the aims of its policy. We do not agree with Sudan's policy. We could have viewed our differences as normal. However, the collective view that there is a threat coming through—and I am not saying from Sudan—makes it a different question. This question has so far not been discussed thoroughly by anyone to satisfy those who level accusations against Sudan.

Despite all of this, all questions are open for dialogue, which should be the basis of our relationship. The meeting between myself and the Sudanese foreign minister is aimed at resuming this dialogue. It is not that there is a breach between us, but Egypt has some reservations.

['Abd-al-Sami'] What about the agenda of your meeting with the Sudanese foreign minister?

[Musa] It is open.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Those who are well versed in public opinion say that such meetings are usually preceded by highly optimistic statements about the outcome of the dialogue. However, the Sudanese side has launched fiery statements at many stages of the dialogue.

[Musa] If this happened once or twice, it will not happen a third time.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Why?

[Musa] Because it is not a laughable or funny matter. These relations have to do with pan-Arab security and stability in the Arab and African world, since African security is part of regional security. This dialogue could change some concepts and conduct. If what is required is something different than this and if there are other parties that seek something else, then we will never allow this to happen.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Egyptian diplomacy is now playing a role in facing terrorism, after it has been proven that terrorism has links with foreign networks. In this context, there are contacts with Arab and other countries (Pakistan, Afghanistan, and some Scandinavian nations). Has Egyptian diplomacy been successful in this regard?

[Musa] Egyptian diplomacy is part of the state. Terrorism is stabbing the Egyptian community, economy, and character in the heart. Therefore, there can be no letup in confronting those who murder and commit crimes for the sake of it. This terrorism must stop. Here, I have to make a distinction between two things. There is a fundamentalist approach, which is political and ideological in nature, and for which the door can be opened within the context of democracy. This approach can express itself through societies and publications so as to play a role in educating the public. As for having recourse to arms, this means that this approach has stopped being an ideological current and has embraced terrorist conduct, using methods that are opposed by any government and any law, including Islamic law.

['Abd-al-Sami'] What results have Egyptian diplomatic efforts produced in this respect?

[Musa] So long as fire continues to be opened on people and there are terrorist crimes, the law will be applied inside and outside [Egypt].

['Abd-al-Sami'] What objective circumstances would allow the establishment of sound Egyptian-Iranian relations, particularly in light of the calm that prevails over these relations now?

[Musa] There are more reasons for improving relations between Egypt and Iran and between Iran and the Arab countries than there are reasons for weakening them. However, everything has rules. These rules should necessarily comprise mutual respect for sovereignty, respect for the territorial intergrity of the Arab countries, particularly those adjacent to Iran, and renunciation of the desire to control others.

Iran is not the only one responsible for Islam and the Islamic World. We all are members of this Islamic society and we have a big responsibility. Egypt could claim that it has done much within this framework of religious commitment in terms of al-Azhar, Islamic culture, and the spreading of an enlightened Islamic ideolgoy from Cairo. Egypt also believes that no party can claim that it alone works in this field. We also do not deny others their rights or roles.

Who is responsible for the fact that Islam is now attacked throughout the world? We all must cooperate to restore Islam to what it really should be in this world.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Every time the issue of relations between Tehran and Cairo is raised, things appear to be on the verge of the resumption of sound and full relations, then everything suddenly comes to a halt, without overt justifications?

[Musa] Since we come close to establishing such relations, then we must remain optimistic.

['Abd-al-Sami'] Are there any Egyptrian-Iranian contacts now?

[Musa] No contacts are being held in the acknowledged sense of the word. But, when I meet Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati, we sit and talk because the dialogue has not been suspended.

['Abd-al-Sami'] During these transient contacts, have you sensed in one way or the other that there are circumstances which permit the establishment of sound Egyptian-Iranian relations?

[Musa] Perhaps, the wish does exist, but circumstances still have to change first.

Former Nigerian President Departs After Visit

NC2912102493 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0846 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—Former Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida left Cairo this morning at the end of a private visit of several days to Cairo. He was seen off at the airport by Cairo Governor 'Umar 'Abd-al-Akhir.

Uzbek Religious Affairs Minister Departs

NC2912123193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1032 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Excerpts] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA)—'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abdallah, Uzbekistan's minister of religious affairs [name as received], and the delegation accompanying him left Cairo this afternoon after a visit of several days during which he conveyed a message from Uzbek President Islam Karimov to President Husni Mubarak.

In a departure statement, 'Abdallah said President Mubarak asked him to convey a response to the Uzbek president. [passage omitted]

Bidding farewell to the Uzbek official, Awqaf Minister Dr. Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub said that President Mubarak agreed to allow Uzbek students to study at Egyptian universities and that the first 125 students would arrive in mid-January. [passage omitted]

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi Issues Document on Security Apparatus

NC3012120393 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 27 Dec 93 pp 10, 11

[Report by Fayzah Sa'd]

[Text] Some Western countries have tightened control measures around Libyan opposition figures living there, asking them to be more careful and cautious in their movements, particularly after the mysterious kidnapping in Cairo of former Libyan Foreign Minister Mansur al-Kikhya. The security agencies in many countries have started to take seriously Colonel al-Qadhdhafi's threats to liquidate the regime's opposition abroad.

Following complications in the Lockerbie file and evidence of the opposition factions' ability to infiltrate Libya and ignite rebellion similar to what happened in Misratah, al-Qadhdhafi made changes in his security apparatuses to protect his regime, assigning all these jobs to his family members.

Col. al-Qadhdhafi has issued a document, entitled "The Revolutionary Legitimacy," which for the first time contains no slogans but rather sets out strict security instructions. The document was distributed among the big five in Libya: 'Abd-al-Salam Jallud, Major al-Khuwaylidi al-Humaydi, Colonel Mustafa al-Kharrubi, Abu-Bakr Yunus, in addition to al-Qadhdhafi himself. It was a big surprise when 'Ali 'Abd-al-Fadil, director of al-Qadhdhafi's bureau, was told that the document ordered the reorganization of the security organs as a precaution against the difficult days to come due to the repercussions of the Lockerbie issue. Accordingly, al-Kharrubi's authorities were withdrawn and he was appointed as inspector in the armed forces, Defense Minister Abu-Bakr Yunus was "given no responsibilities," nor was Major al-Khuwaylidi al-Humaydi, who was formerly responsible for foreign, domestic, and military security. They were all put at the disposal of the colonel, who is to assign them specific tasks.

'Abd-al-Salam Jallud's role in the people's congresses was restricted. He is said to live in a private house on the Canary Islands. His tribe, the al-Mafarihah, has been disarmed, thus making them vulnerable to rival tribes like the Durfillis and al-Buray'isat. The colonel has succeeded with his divide-and-rule policy and in taming the tribal factor and exploiting it to serve his regime.

Al-Qadhdhafi has set up a security team that supervises all security apparatuses, foreign and domestic, operating in Tripoli. Known as the Leader's Information Bureau, the team is comprised of presidents of apparatuses and security consultants. Captain Ahmad Ramadan al-Asabi'ah supervises the bureau and he is responsible for security, second only to al-Qadhdhafi. He studied security in East Germany and Bulgaria and mastered the art of planning and preparing.

The name Mas'ud 'Abd-al-Hafiz al-Qadhdhafi, of the al-Hazrah clan—a branch of the al-Qadhdhafi tribe—is prominent as head of the "security battalions," selected military units composed of airborne troops that surround the big cities. They are prepared to abort any rebellion or coup attempt. People close to Mas'ud say that he has recruited many young people in the cities and that he has strong ties with Rome, Madrid, and Ndjamina.

According to reports from Libya, 12 personalities are threats to lead coups against al-Qadhdhafi. These include Mansur al-Kikhya and Muhammad al-Maqrif, who resides in America.

Reports indicate that the names listed in that (?document) will tell the security agencies who kidnapped al-Kikhya in Cairo, particularly because al-Qadhdhafi had given instructions to kidnap three of his major opponents: Muhammad al-Maqrif, who lives in America; Mansur al-Kikhya; and 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Huni, who is living in Cairo at present.

Al-Qadhdhafi Views Various International Issues

Says Lockerbie Not Political Issue

LD2912221693 Tripoli JANA in English 1602 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Tripoli, Al Kanoun 29 [29 Dec], JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The leader of the revolution told the masses of Laajilat who went out in large crowds to welcome him that the West were wrong in insisting on turning the Lockerbie legal matter into a political issue.

They could have avoided this serious slide if they kept the matter solely within its legal context.

Questions Human Rights for Subjects

LD2912224193 Tripoli JANA in English 1745 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Tripoli, Al Kanun [December] 29, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The leader of the revolution asked 'What are human rights organisations in the world going to say as they see two Libyan individuals by the major powers who are seeking to force them to abandon their human rights?. [sentence and quotation marks as received]

Also the leader asked 'Where are human rights when a person is forced to leave his country and coerced to stand trial before a hostile court which he rejects? Where are human rights when sanctions are imposed on a country to force it to abandon the rights of its citizens?'

This came in a speech by the leader of the revolution to the masses of Laajilat who went out in large crowds to welcome him.

Offers 'Olive Branch'

LD2912222693 Tripoli JANA in English 1603 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Tripoli, Al Kanoun 29 [29 Dec], JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The leader of the revolution declared "We reject the accusations after they were proved before the whole world that they were false."

In a speech to the popular masses who went out to welcome him, the leader of the revolution said "we have shown the olive branch demanding friendship and love between peoples. We called for understanding, peaceful solution and mutual interest but the colonial circles refused this and sought confrontation.

Lauds Somalian People

LD2912223493 Tripoli JANA in English 1736 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Tripoli, Al Kanoun 29 [29 Dec], JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The leader of the revolution pointed out that no one stood by the Somali people but the latter decided to fight relying on themselves until they forced the biggest power in the world to withdraw and flee Somalia.

This came in a speech by the leader of the revolution to the masses of Laajilat who came out in large crowds to welcome him.

Sudan

Sources on Iraqi, Iranian Radar, Missile Experts

NC2912205893 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 26 Dec 93 p 9

[Text] Port Sudan—Sources from our Sudanese brothers in the city of Port Sudan affirm that the area of the Red Sea mountain range is currently witnessing a large influx of Iraqi experts working under the cover of prospecting for oil, when everyone knows that Iraq does not have any technology to dig for oil. Specially informed sources in the eastern region affirmed that investigations have proven that the Iraqis there are experts in missiles, defense systems, radar, and planes.

The first post where the Iraqis are stationed is in Madabay in Khawr Ashraf [placenames as published] and Port Sudan city. This region was more or less a marginal station for radar before the coup by the Islamic Front. Recently, it has been reinforced with highly developed equipment, as well as computers. The region is experiencing strict security measures and 24-hour armed patrols roam around it. Shepherds and Arab nomads have been completely removed from the area within a 60 km circumference.

The region of Dalawat [placename as published] on the Red Sea near the city of Hala'ib also has an Iraqi presence. The identity of the people is unknown and strict security measures are also in force. In addition, there is a station at the town of It, parallel to the city of 'Arus al-Sahaliyah [placename as published] where there are some Iranian elements.

Alleged Iraqi experts were also seen in the region of Karnakanat [placename as published] on the northern coast of the city of Tawkar.

This is a region for prospecting for natural gas. The contract of a French company working in this area was terminated.

Some armed boats belonging to the Sudanese Navy are also in the same region supervised by Iranians.

In addition, our sources confirm Iraqis are supervising the development of the secret airport in Udrus [placename as published], west of al-Wihdah [placename as published] district, the last district of Port Sudan. This region is surrounded by special forces and shock troops to secure the area.

Al-Bashir Reviews Talks With 'Arafat, Other Issues

EA2912165893 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, the president of the Republic, received the report of the committee on the redivision of the states this morning at the secretariat general of the Council of

Ministers. His Excellency described the report as scientific and fully comprehensive and praised the committee on preparing it. Meeting media leaders today, Lt. Gen. 'Umar said that the committee's overwhelming conclusion was that the states should be redivided in a manner conducive to the enhancement of federalism. He said the committee's recommendations on redividing the states would be implemented in conformity with the relevant provisions of the constitution.

Referring to his meeting yesterday with the Palestinian leader, Yasir 'Arafat, Lt. Gen. 'Umar said it was held in the context of the regular consultations between them. He was accordingly briefed on the latest developments affecting the Gaza/Jericho agreement. He said that it had become clear from the rounds of negotiations which had been held with Israel on implementing the agreement that the Israeli side was persisting in prevaricating and temporizing with the Palestinian leadership in an attempt to extract more concessions. He went on to say that after every round of negotiations, the Israelis had taken a step backward.

His Excellency the president of the Republic said that his talks with 'Arafat also concerned the need to bring about the unity of the Arab rank at this stage and to coordinate Arab efforts, especially those of the surrounding states [duwal al-tawq]. He said Israeli obstinacy must become the determinant of solidarity. In this context, Lt. Gen. al-Bashir praised once again the initiative of Shaykh Zayid-Bin Sultan, head of state of the United Arab Emirates, and the Moroccan monarch, King Hasan II, toward restoring Arab solidarity. He said he hoped efforts would continue to be made until solidarity was achieved.

Kuwait

Minister Views Foreign Participation in Oil Sector

LD2812151893 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1329 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Excerpt] Manamah, 28 Dec (KUNA)—In a press interview published here today, Kuwaiti Oil Minister 'Ali al-Baghli said that Kuwait has not made a decision yet regarding foreign participation in the state-owned oil sector.

In an interview with the Bahraini daily AL-AYYAM reported by the Gulf news agency, WAKH, al-Baghli added that the question of foreign participation in the oil sector is still under study.

The Kuwaiti minister stressed that his country is abiding by the quota of two million barrels per day allotted to it by OPEC at its meeting in Geneva last September.

Al-Baghli also said that the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] member-states are ready to consider any measure that will bring about a rise in the price of gasoline with a view to making up for the losses suffered by producers, including the GCC countries, as a result of the fall in prices. He pointed out that the GCC member states object to lowering production unless that leads to a rise in prices. [passage omitted]

Defense Minister Receives Russian Navy Commander

LD2912150093 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1341 GMT 29 Dec

[Text] Kuwait 29 Dec. (KUNA)—Minister of Defense Shaykh 'Ali Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah has received Admiral Feliks Gromov, commander of the Russian navy, and his delegation. The meeting, which was attended by the Russian ambassador in Kuwait, dealt with relations between the two friendly countries.

Admiral Gromov, who arrived in Kuwait yesterday, also conferred with the Faysal al-Dawud, deputy chief of the General Staff and under secretary of the Ministry of Defense. The meeting was an opportunity to examine topics of interest to the two countries and matters revolving around the current military exercises [in the Gulf] that fall within the framework of the implementation of the joint defense agreement between the two countries.

Saudi Arabia

King Fahd Addresses Shura Council Members

LD2812211293 Riyadh SPA in English 1959 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Riyadh, Dec 28, SPA—Custodian of the two holy mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz received here today members of the Shura (Consultative) Council. The council members took the oath of office before the custodian of the two holy mosques.

Later on, King Fahd delivered a speech in which he stressed that "today is one of the best days that I will register with myself and the homeland will register for you."

He stressed that when the kingdom wanted to set up organizations coinciding with the Islamic creed in text and spirit, it found efficient and able Saudi citizens—in terms of political, social or religious matters—to shoulder this responsibility.

King Fahd said that he once was asked by a citizen how he chose the number of Shura Council members. The monarch replied: "Why did you not ask me how I chose the ones I chose?"

King Fahd stressed that all Saudi provinces are rich in well-learned, efficient citizens and pointed out that all selected council members have had comprehensive religious studies.

He said he found capable citizens in all areas needed by the homeland on the highest levels, including civil servants and people working in universities or other public utilities, as well as citizens who have performed glorious work to help develop their country.

He pointed out that the development of the kingdom started when it was decided to set up an education ministry during the time of the late King Sa'ud.

He pointed to cables of congratulations sent by world leaders, both Arabs and non-Arabs, which confirmed that the selected members of the shura Council can perform this glorious work for their country.

"I know this, your government knows this and the citizens know this," he said, adding that the fact that congratulations were extended by heads of foreign states was signficant.

He stressed that the kingdom is committed to the Islamic creed in text and spirit and rejects any matter that does not coincide with it and pointed out that the Islamic creed is one of the best organizational systems in the world in the economic, social and other areas fields.

He affirmed that since the kingdom was following the best way (the way of Islam) it does not care for those who object or ask why elections are not held.

He said elections are found in various places of the world and nobody objects to them, "but we follow the path shown by the Book of Allah the Almighty, his apostle and the wise khalifs."

"We do not follow the wrong path. We follow the one he ordered us to follow," King Fahd added.

He said the kingdom does [not] interfere in others' affairs, but at the same time it does not permit others to interfere in its affairs. "We are a country that will remain committed to the Book of Allah and the tradition of his apostle, with God's willing, and will not deviate from them under any circumstances", he said adding that mistakes are sometimes made and nobody is infallable except Allah's apostle.

The custodian of the two holy mosques expressed happiness that when he wanted to select a number of citizens to be members of the Shura Council the desired human resources were abundant.

He thanked Allah for stability in the kingdom and confirmed that the council will yield the desired results to raise the kingdom to the highest levels, and will be respected, appreciated and will inspire confidence.

Addressing council members, he expressed hope that they would continue to persue the missions entrusted to them and pledged his own support and that of cabinet members to them stressing that they all have the same goal.

"I conclude my speech by saying, honest to God, that I am now with men from the homeland on the highest levels in all fields, which is quite fortunate," King Fahd said.

The ceremony was attended by Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the deputy premier and head of the National Guard, Second Deputy Premier, Minister of Defence and Aviation and Inspector general Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Riyadh Region Governor Prince Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Medina Region Governor Prince 'Abd- al-Majid Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin Fahd Bin-' Abd- al-'Aziz, Shura Council Chairman Shaykh Mohammad Bin Jubayr, the head of the royal court Mohammad al-Nuwaiser, the special adviser to the king Ibrahim al-Anqari, Information Minister 'ali al-Sha'er and several other senior royal court and Shura Council officials.

King Fahd, Crown Prince 'Abdallah and Prince Sultan posed for pictures with the Shura Council members to commemmorate the occasion.

King Fahd Opens Consultative Council 29 Dec

LD2912133493 Riyadh SPA in English 1230 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Riyadh, Dec 29, SPA—The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz inaugurated here on Wednesday [29 December] the majles Shura (the Consultative Council).

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Sa'ud inaugurated here on Wednesday the functions of the 60-member Shura Council (Majles al-Shura).

Upon arrival to the headquarters of the council, King Fahd was greeted by Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the deputy premier and commander of the National Guard, Prince Mishal Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the second deputy premier, minister of defense, aviation and inspector general, Prince Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the governor of Riyadh region, Shaykh Mohammed Bin Jubair the chairman of the council and senior officials.

Shortly after arrival, King Fahd unveiled the memorial plaque to officially launch the functions of the Shura Council.

The ceremony started with a recital of the Holy Koran. Then, Shura Council Chairman Shaykh Mohammad Bin-Jubair delivered a speech in which he stressed that "more than 60 years ago, at a meeting like our meeting today, the unifier of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, King 'Abd-al-'Aziz—may God have mercy on him—addressed the Shura Council saying "...and we have to follow what is stated in the book of Allah and the tradition of his apostle (peace be upon him), in implementation of his (Allah's) order to "consult them in affairs (of moment)."

"Brothers, the leader of our rise and pioneer of our march, and planner of our administrative, educational and economic development, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, confirms that the tradition of Allah's apostle and follows the footsteps of his father (may God have mercy on him), will deliver his address to inaugurate the functions of the Shura Council in its new shape, after he had modernized and developed it and selected its members who are highly efficient in all specializations, in confirmation of the sincere desire to utilize their effeciencies," Shaykh Bin Jubair said.

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin 'Abd-al-'Aziz has expressed deep pleasure and pride over the inauguration of Majles al-Shura within its new framework and thanked the almighty Allah for the countless favours he bestowed upon the Kingdom since its establishment on bases of the Islamic Shair'ah and the Islamic teachings with shura (consultation) as a basic element in the ruling system.

Citing the basic systems of the Shura Council, government and regions he issued two years ago, King Fahd said the rules of the three systems were stemmed from the true Islamic teachings and unwavering and profound understanding of what has been mentioned in the Holy Koran and the pure sunnah besides the indigineous values of traditions of the Saudi society.

Reminding the audience of the contents of the speech he delivered to the nation on the day the three systems were declared, King Fahd reiterated determination that the Kingdom will go-ahead with the implementation of the Islamic laws with the blessings of the gracious Allah and the abilities of the faithful Saudi people.

"With the blessing and grace of the almighty God, and with the hands of the faithful Saudi people, we shall continue the welfare march of construction and development and maintain the gains which are reflected by the comprehensive rise in various fields," he said.

The Saudi monarch made it clear that the Islamic Shari'ah will be the main source of the shura systems in the Kingdom.

He added the shura system, under the umbrella of Islamic teachings, has existed for a very long time.

Saudi rulers had a tradition of consulting ulemas and wise men.

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has its distinguished situation and unique place on the Islamic level in its systems and institutions, all of them stem form the Islamic teachings, and we are full of confidence that this council, God willing, would realise the welfare aspirations of our country and people," he said.

King Fahd enumerated the great boons the almighty Allah has bestowed on the Kingdom, which has been honoured by the service of the two holy mosques.

He vowed that the Kingdom will go head with steadfast determination with the reformation and reconstruction process and will enroll all its human and material capabilities to realize the best interests of the country and citizens.

He urged citizens not to forget thanking the gracious Allah for numerous favours bestowed upon the Kingdom. He expressed good wishes to the members of the Shura Council and members of the regional councils.

King Fahd, in an extemporary speech afterwards, expressed the great hopes being attached on the Shura Council and that the council would realise the noble targets for which it has been set up with the blessings of the almighty God and magnificant capabilities of the Saudi youth.

He thanked the almighty God for the great boons bestowed upon this country as the homeland of the prophet, peace be upon him and said the state will not hestitate to undertake any task that might benefit the country and its citizens with full cooperation between the Council of Ministers, the Shura Council and regional councils.

The Saudi monarch emphasized the fact that the Islamic laws would be useful for all administrative and living aspects and the best method to dedicate the unique relationship between people and rulers.

On behalf of Crown Prince 'Abdallah and members of the Council of Ministers, King Fahd wished the council success and then left the headquarters of the council.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'abd-al-'Aziz, the deputy premier and commander of the National Guard, Prince Mishal Bin-'abd-al-'Aziz, Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the second deputy premier, minister of defense, aviation and inspector general, Prince Mohammed Bin-'Abdallah-Bin-Jalawi, Prince Fahd al-Faysal al-Farhan, Prince Fahd Bin-Sa'ud Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince Abdallah Bin Mohammed Bin-Sa'ud al-Kabeer, Prince Fahd Bin Mohammed Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince 'Abdallah Bin Mohammed Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince Abdulrahman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the deputy minister of defense and aviation, Prince Metib Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the minister of public works and housing, Prince Badr Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the vice commander of the National Guard, Prince Nawaf Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince Naif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the minister of interior, Prince Fawaz Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz.

The ceremony was also attended by Prince Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the governor of Riyadh region, Prince Mohammed Bin Sa'ud Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz the governor of Baha region, Prince Abdul Illah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince Abdulmajid Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the governor of Medinah region, Prince Meqrin Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, governor of Ha'il region, Prince Khalid al-Faysal, the governor of 'Assir region, Prince Abdallah Bin Badr Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin Mosa'd, governor of northern frontier zone, Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister, Prince Sa'ud Bin-'Abd-al-Mohsin, the vice governor of Mecca region, Prince Bandar Bin-'Abdallah Bin 'Abd-al-Rahman, Prince Turki al-Faysal, Prince Sa'ud Bin-'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-Rahman, Prince Faysal Bin Bandar Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the governor of Qassim region, Prince Mohammed Bin Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, governor of the eastern region, Prince Bandar Bin Fahd Bin-Sa'ad, Prince Faysal Bin 'Abdallah Bin-Mohammed, advisor at the crown prince court.

Prince Mohammed Bin Nawaf Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince Fahd Bin Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince Khalid Bin Turki Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince Turki Bin Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince Bandar Bin Mosa'd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin Salman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin Sattam Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Prince 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, many ulema, ministers, high-ranking officials and members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were also present.

Shura Members Comment on Occasion

LD2912213093 Riyadh SPA in English 1951 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Riyadh, Dec 29, SPA—Shaykh Muhammed Bin Ibrahim Bin Jubayr, chairman of the Majles Shura (the consultative council) expressed his delight and the delight and profound thanks of all members of the council to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz for inaugurating the council.

In a statement to SPA on this historic occasion, Shaykh Bin Jubayr prayed to Allah almighty to safeguard the kingdom's security and stablity under the prudent leadership of King Fahd.

Shaykh Bin Jubayr said "praise be to Allah for bestowing on the country this wise leadership represented by King Fahd who had been keen on implementing the precepts of Islam and the Sunnah".

he cited the formation of the council as a total compliance with all heavenly orders and said the Shura was an Islamic principle which can not be applied except in a Muslim community and should be one of the characteristics of the Muslim community.

Shaykh Bin Jubayr said the kingdom had known Shura since the two imams Muhammad Bin Sa'ud and Muhammad Bin 'Abd-al-Wahhab consulted among themselves. This consultation system continued up till the foundation of the first Shura council in the kingdom in 1346 h during the era of late King 'Abd-al-'Aziz.

That council continued to operate until its system was revised and modified, Shaykh Bin Jubayr said.

He said the Shura in the kingdom was deeply rooted and was expressed in many ways like the open door policy which had been adopted by the leaders of the kingdom who had been keen on meeting citizens at least once a week as well as in the consultative councils like the Petroleum Council, the Civil Service Council, the Information Council, the Education Council and other municipal and administrative councils.

In a similar statement, Dr. 'Abdallah 'Umar Nasif, vice chairman of Majles Shura (the consultative council) described the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz's opening of the council as a valuable national occasion.

in a statement to SPA on the occasion of the opening of the council Wednesday, Dr. Nasif said Shura is an Islamic value and the kingdom is an Islamic country which is ruled by the Sharia and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH).

Dr. Nasif said the Shura system was different from all eastern and western systems because it stems from Islam and the kingdom had known Shura since its unification at the hands of late King 'Abd-al-'Aziz who set up the first Shura council almost seventy years ago.

He expressed his delight over the opening of the council and expressed hope that it will work for the development and progress of the country and its citizens, under the wise leadership of King Fahd.

For his part, Dr. Hemud al-Badr, the secretary general of the Shura council described the opening of the council by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques king Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Wednesday as a valuable initiative.

in a statement to SPA on the occasion, Dr.al-Badr said the opening of the council marks a new development phase that would be added to our outstanding experiences.

He said the experiment of the Shura was not something new to the kingdom but an updating of a practice which started with the begining of this great entity, a modification for the system, rules and regulations and members and we hope it would serve as a beacon for lighting the path of the Saudi people and leadership.

Members of the newly inaugurated Majles Shura (the consultative council) expressed their pride in the inauguration of the council by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz.

In statements to SPA on the occasion, they described the inauguration as a great national occasion which came as a coronation for the great deeds of King Fahd in service of the kingdom in all fields.

They said the opening of the council by King Fahd means the placing of all on the threshold of responsiblity and a springboard for the practical implementation of the Shura system and achievement of its objectives.

Ibrahim al-Gadhi, a member of the new council, said it was a great honor to have the council opened by King Fahd.

Al-Gadhi said the Shura was a firm foundation and one of the great pillars of the Islamic system because it was mentioned in the two basic sources of the Islamic Sharia, that is Islam and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

He said the Saudi state since its foundation by the Imam Muhammad Bin-Sa'ud had been established according to the Sharia.

Al-Gadhi said when it was re-established, the late King 'Abd-al-'Aziz had reconstructed the Saudi state according to the Islamic Sharia and established the Shura council in 1348 h.

Al-Gadhi said the new system of the Shura council which has been approved by King Fahd had fulfilled the expected goals of the council in the service of the country and its people.

Ibrahim al-Julaydan, a member of the council, praised the experiment of the council and said the security and stablity the kingdom was enjoying had been a direct result of its adherence to the teachings of Islam and the implementation of the Sharia rules.

For his part, member Jamil al-Meman described the opening of the council by King Fahd as a historic event which would have an effective impact on the course of life in the kingdom through the sincere and honest advice and collective efforts that would based on good faith and loyality.

Dr. Zahir Awwadh al-Almai, another member of the council, said Shura was an Islamic principle adopted by the late King 'Abd-al-'Aziz and his sons.

He said King Fahd has given a unique status for the council and showed personal interest in its formation.

Dr. Sayid al-Mullais said the opening of the council was a landmark in the history of the kingdom which began the re-unification of this entity at the hands of the late King 'Abd-al-'Aziz.

'Abd-al-'Aziz Abumelha noted the great deeds of King Fahd in service of his country and people in all walks of life.

He said the basic system of government, the system of the council of ministers, Majles Shura and the regions councils were a pioneering cultural stepforward that took into consideration the requirements of our time and maintained the teachings and principles of islam that distinguished the kingdom from other countries.

Faysal Ahmed Zaidan said the opening of the council has taken the kingdom through the gate of the modern age and added that it would open new scopes of progress and development infront of the Saudi citizen.

Kamal Merghelani said the opening of the council was considered the take off point toward the practical implementation of the Majles Shura system.

Muhammad al-Sharif described the opening of the council as an important occasion in the history of the kingdom as it translates the sincere desire of the king to seek the opinion of the elite of the sons of this country in taking the important resolutions which have direct effect on the interest of the citizen.

For his part, Dr Mansur al-Nuzha said the inauguration of consultative council by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz constitutes a great historical event and comes as a culmination for the issuance of the royal orders pertaining to the system of the rule as well as the systems of the regions and the consultative council.

The inauguration of the council will add more to the achievements accomplished during King Fahd's era including the expansion projects at the two holy mosques, King Fahd complex for the printing of the Holy Quran, expansion in opening of specialist hospitals, approval to open 2000 primary health care centers, expansion in the educational sector, opening of a large number of institutes and schools throughout the kingdom in addition to road networks to link the kingdom's regions, he elaborated.

We pray to the almighty god to enable the monarch reach the big and great goals he is planning to reach and enable us all to serve the religion, the king and the country, he added.

On the other hand, Dr Hamad Bin Muhammad al-Firyan said the issuance of the royal orders pertaining to the establishment of the consultative council and naming its members as well as the other statutes and systems is viewed as a gigantic historical achievement that has drawn the attention of the world.

It also constitutes a giant step forward in the comprehensive administrative organization, he added.

He pointed out that the ideal usage of the principle of consultation will have a positive impact on the future of the country.

Yemen

Support Pledged for Omani Efforts on Oil Pricing

JN2712142593 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 27 Dec 93

[Text] The Republic of Yemen and the Sultanate of Oman urged oil producing countries to support the efforts aimed at improving oil prices in a manner that serves the joint interests of all oil producing and consuming countries, helps ensure stability in the market, and realizes international economic growth.

This was announced at the end of a meeting last night between our country and the sisterly Sultanate of Oman. Our country's delegation was led by Salih Abu-Bakr Bin-Husaynun, oil and mineral resources minister, and Sa'id Bin-Ahmad al-Shanfari, Omani petroleum and minerals minister.

Talks at the meeting dealt with aspects of bilateral cooperation in the field of oil, minerals, and gas. They also discussed consultations and coordination on the efforts of the non-OPEC members to realize cooperation between all oil producing countries in order to unify their ranks and prevent a price slump while reducing production.

Though its production is limited, and despite its current economic situation, the Republic of Yemen emphasized its support for the efforts of the sisterly Sultanate of Oman, including the call to reduce production within the framework of efforts of non-OPEC member states to balance supply and demand.

In a statement to the Yemeni News Agency, SABA', before leaving our country, Brother al-Shanfari expressed satisfaction with the positive results he reached in the field of bilateral petroleum cooperation.

He was seen off at Rayyan Airport by Bin-Husaynun and a number of ministry's officials.

Saddam Addresses Cabinet; Budget Approved

JN2912175293 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, has presided over a special meeting of the Council of Ministers, during which the current budget and the investment plan for 1994 was debated.

Commenting on the views aired during the meeting regarding certain aspects of the budget and the plan, his excellency the president, may God protect him, has said: Work gives man health and renders him vibrant. In the same vein, it revitalizes the economy and makes it healthy. As for idleness in both cases, it causes sluggishness and weakness. Hence, we must work forcefully and actively so that we may not become weak. Moreover, work grants us vitality, experience, and growth, even though we are still suffering from the embargo.

His excellency the leader president added: However, the basic questions concern how we should work, the priorities we should observe, and the course we should take. Should we, for example, spend a great deal of time and effort studying and examining how we can save five dinars, and fail to conduct any studies on expenditure and costs that would help us save 100 dinars, for example? Let us say that several high-investment projects are going to be implemented at a certain place by the same administration, or the same ministry. Asking several persons to study the means of reducing expenditure in this case is likely to help save hundreds of millions of dinars.

His excellency the president went on to say: People have the impression that some project managers have failed to pay due attention to the means of identifying low-cost alternatives. Nor have they made it their business to negotiate with this or that merchant to obtain the most suitable prices from him to reduce expenditures. This is because their overriding concern is meeting deadlines and achieving a high level of performance.

His excellency the president urged the Council of Ministers to study a formula, according to which a body or a committee of technical and administrative experts would be assigned the task of scrutinizing expenditures for projects other than those they are working on. They could be affiliated with other departments of a certain ministry, or even with other ministries. In the course of their studies, these experts and the concerned project management officials must reach joint decisions to reduce expenditures. They must be granted joint awards. Whoever submits a proposal or initiates an action that could reduce expenditure must be rewarded. If they examine the data regarding 30 major projects and manage to save 1 billion dinars in expenditure, and at the same time meet deadlines and achieve a high level of performance, then we will have achieved the required vitality as well as the required expertise conducive to improved performance.

The leader president added: During a previous meeting with you, I posed to you the following question: In case we partially or entirely defeat the embargo, do you think that we should resume our imports of finished products, or that we should manufacture them domestically? Then, we agreed that we should not resume our imports of finished products. We must examine all ways and means of manufacturing these products in Iraq. We might need to import some materials that would facilitate our industrial endeavor—the materials that we are absolutely unable to produce domestically, although inability to produce materials in this regard is relative in terms of both time and changing capabilities. Iraq has great opportunities for growth, production, and economic progress. For, Iraqis have learned in the al-Qadisiyah battle [the war with Iran] the virtues of work and production. Likewise, they have learned in the Mother of Battles all aspects of work, production, and management. They are now capable of becoming highly efficient employers. For instance, Iraqi women are now in no need of imported dresses. This is because we are capable of producing sewing machines for them. This enables them to produce dresses that are most often better than those that could be imported. If they have the time and added capabilities, they could launch sewing workshops at which they could hire several workers. As for men, we can provide them with machines and some equipment. Many men are capable of becoming employers and technicians at the same time. If we provide them with the opportunity, they might seek the assistance of non-Iraqi labor to expand their work and production. This is because leadership traits as well as expertise have been nurtured within Iraqis in the aftermath of the al-Qadisiyah battle and the Mother of Battles. Whoever enjoys these traits is bound to be creative and innovative and capable of motivating others.

Thus, the country's wealth will increase and the Iraqis' standard will be higher. You should take advantage of your employees' qualifications and aspirations. You should put them in the fields in which they can offer the most in order to enhance their skills, and consequently, increase their future job opportunities, even outside Iraq in fields such as digging rivers or setting up projects. Such matters should be propagated practically and officially on the cultural and media levels.

His excellency then called on the Council of Ministers to show more interest in the fields of agricultural production and irrigation. He added that their interests should be in all aspects of these fields. He said more time must be given for research, exploring alternatives, and achieving better economic results through proper decisionmaking and follow through. Such interest will reduce our food imports, and consequently, spare hard currency for importing production tools. We should also plan to manufacture these tools locally in a short time.

His excellency said: This year, particularly during the second half of this year, we began a campaign to develop subdistricts within the governorates. We charged the interior minister with preparing proposals to the Council of Ministers on methods to develop subdistricts in all fields, such as sewage systems, [words indistinct], and drinking water. These methods will become our guidelines and will be classified in categories such as a, b, and c. Therefore, the subdistrict and district administrative officers, as well as the governors, will follow these guidelines that will define the responsibility of each party. We will then ask whether or not we should proceed with developing other subdistricts. And if we proceed with this plan, we must ask whether or not we should use locally produced material. Shall we compete with citizens? If so, the prices will go up. How can we choose the priorities and alternatives? Will all the ministers, or some group of them, or only the Interior Ministry officials embark on this experiment? We should evaluate and learn from this experiment, which was described by some of you as pioneering.

His excellency said: Finally, the evil ones failed to undermine the Iraqis' determination. The Iraqis' future, God willing, will be shining. Many happy returns to our people, to our nation, and to you.

Prime Minister Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir and Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz received the leader president, may God preserve him.

Welcoming his excellency, Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir said: The Cabinet members are proud of your visit. Our meeting with you increases our determination under your victorious banner. The prime minister added: At the end of 1993, we can say that Iraq, under your leadership, is in good shape. Iraq has succeeded in overcoming difficulties. What remains is a stage that befits the Iraqis.

The leader president concluded by saying: I once said that in the last third of Ramadan there are rewards and difficulties.

Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir then said: My comrades, the members of the Cabinet, expect good things in your presence. On behalf of them, sir, I wish my leader, may God preserve him and grant him victory over his enemies, best wishes on the new year. We are your faithful soldiers, who fight under your banner on all fronts.

The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, INA, has learned that the Council of Ministers decided, after extensive discussion, to endorse the 1994 budget and the investment plan by reducing 25 percent of the 1993 budget.

Clashes Continue in Irbil, al-Sulaymaniyah

JN2812201493 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Irbil reports have said that the armed clashes between the subversive, agent cliques escalated yesterday and today in the Irbil and al-Sulaymaniyah Governorates. A large number of people were killed or wounded. The agent terrorists used mortars and launchers in shelling each side inside al-Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, and adjacent villages.

Mas'ud Barzani this evening called on the members of the so-called Islamic Movement to join Mas'ud's party.

Fierce fighting is taking place now in Chamchamal between unknown forces and Jalal Talabani's elements.

The so-called Islamic Movement denied Jalal Talabani's claims of achieved victories over the movement. It affirmed that it is still controlling all its headquarters and that fierce fighting continued between them.

Radio Reports Security Situation

JN2912201993 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] The security situation in Irbil and al-Sulaymaniyah is still tense. Most stores are closed. As for life there, it has been brought to a standstill. The sound of shells and rounds are heard along the perimeters of Irbil and al-Sulaymaniyah. Moreover, all the roads between cities, districts, and hamlets have been closed by the warring cliques. The hospitals are full of corpses and the wounded, who are not receiving any medical treatment. As for citizens, they are finding it difficult to obtain their food requirements.

News reports from al-Sulaymaniyah have stated that the clique of agent Mas'ud Barzani and the clique of agent Jalal Talabani are massing their saboteurs on the perimeters and in the suburbs of al-Sulaymaniyah to start a new round of hostilities. This time, the fighting between the two cliques will be direct. It will consummate the tragic situation they created in the region.

Kurd Leaders View Escalation of Crisis

LD2912225493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] With the resignation of Mas'ud Barazani, leader of the Iraqi Kurdistan's Democratic Party—one of the two main parties in northern Iraq—from that region's leadership council, the crisis in Iraqi Kurdistan has entered a new phase. In his statement, Barazani, while accusing Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Iraqi Kurdistan, of pursuing a unilateral policy, has said that he can no longer tolerate this situation. It is worth mentioning that even though following the termination of the oil war, Barazani and Talebani have tried to jointly lead the Iraqi Kurds, the differences of opinion between them, which has often lead to military clashes, has prevented unity among them. Such differences peaked in recent weeks and the parliament of the Iraqi Kurds was forced to form a presidency council on 20 December to overcome such disputes. But in view of the deep-rooted differences between Talabani and Barazani, tensions have continued unabated in the region. The situation went to the extent that the Patriotic Union, by crushing the Islamic Union of Iraqi Kurdistan, tried to gain further power to bolster its position in Northern Iraq.

Meanwhile, informed sources believe that following Talabani's disregard for Barazani's request to halt the clashes, the leader of the Democratic Party of Iraqi Kurdistan has relinquished the joint leadership of Kurdistan. It must be pointed out that the Patriotic Union and the Islamic Union of Kurdistan, after several days of fighting, concluded a cease-fire agreement last Thursday [23 December]. But the clashes resumed two days later, on Saturday.

Meanwhile, even though the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan contends that the leader and members of the Islamic Union have surrendered and their centers have ceased, the statement of the Islamic Union, on the contrary, speaks of its continued resistance and fighting. It is worth noting that the Islamic Union of Kurdistan, as well as some other parties, have accused the two ruling parties of monopolization of power as well as waging a power struggle.

Political observers believe that since the formation of the Poised Hammer force in mid 1992 by the allies for protecting the Kurds, the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan has not been, to such a degree, so tense and critical. This is significant, because apart from recent clashes and the disputes between the two main rival parties, the Iraqi Army often launches ground and artillery attacks against the regions located north of the 36th Parallel, which have been declared a part of the exclusion zone. This is at a time when the critical economic situation in that zone is getting worse every day.

Kurdish Spokesman: West Behind Clashes in Kurdistan

LD2912210893 Tehran IRNA in English 2007 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Piranshahr, West Azerbaijan, Dec 29, IRNA—A spokesman for the Islamic Movement of Iraq's Kurdistan said that the recent clashes in that region had been pre-planned by the West and implemented by Jalal Talabani.

Talking to IRNA here Wednesday [29 December], he said the movement's leader in a statement before the breaking out of clashes had pointed out that the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was not faithful to agreements, adding that the Islamic movement forces had no choice but to respond.

The leader of the Islamic Movement, Molla Othman 'Abd-al-'Aziz, in his statement had accused the PUK of 30 years of corruption, deviation and fratricide in northern Iraq.

The spokesman noted that the difference between the two organizations was rooted in the Islamic movement's resistance against the spreading of corruption by so-called Western humanitarian organizations in northern Iraq and remarked that "the Westerners spread HIV viruses in Iraq's Kurdistan."

He further condemned most relief aid organizations of distributing narcotics in the region and trying to spread corruption there.

He attributed the retreat of Islamic movement forces to the lack of material but stressed that the clashes were still going on in the region.

The recent clashes started in the Rania city of Iraq, in northern province of Suleymaniya, last Saturday and quickly spread all over Iraq's Kurdistan.

It is said that the clashes have claimed the lives of a vast number of Iraqi Kurds and left many injured. No statistics have been released so far.

Muslim Clerics Reportedly Killed in Kurdistan

NC2912182393 Paris AFP in English 1733 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Tehran, Dec 29 (AFP)—An Iraqi Shiite Moslem opposition group on Wednesday [29 December] accused the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) of killing six Moslem religious leaders in northern Iraq.

The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI), in a statement received here by AFP, said the religious leaders had either been executed or killed during clashes between the PUK and the rival pro-Iranian Kurdistan Islamic League (KIL).

SAIRI also charged that several mosques in northern Iraq had been badly hit during the fighting.

"SAIRI strongly condemns such acts and calls for an immediate cease-fire and negotiations," the statement said.

Kurdish sources said at least 72 people had been killed and 250 wounded in clashcutiveween the PUK and KIL since last week, mostly in Irbil and al-Sulaymaniyah, which lies close to the Iranian border.

The PUK flushed out KIL fighters from their military bases on Monday.

PUK leader Jalal Talabani told AFP on Tuesday that the KIL had surrendered their weapons.

Meanwhile, SAIRI said an Islamic delegation representing groups opposed to the Iraqi government would soon leave Syria for northern Iraq to mediate between the rival Kurdish factions.

The delegation et with Talabani in Damascus Tuesday to discuss the situation in northern Iraq, it said.

They asked Talabani to declare an immediate cease-fire and called for information on the fate of the KIL leader, Shaykh 'Uthman 'Abd-al-'Aziz, according to SAIRI.

Rabin Advised To Stay Out of Confederation

TA2912124293 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 29 Dec 93 p A1

[Report by political correspondent Aluf Ben]

[Text] The preferred solution for the permanent arrangement between Israel and the Palestinians is the establishment of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, according to a paper on the "alternatives for the permanent arrangement" compiled by the research unit of a state institution that reports to the Prime Minister's Office. The report was presented to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin this month.

The report studied the alternatives for a permanent arrangement with the Palestinians and analyzed a variety of possible political solutions in which Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians are incorporated, such as a confederation, with or without Israel, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the territories.

The report studied the political, economic, and security aspects of the permanent arrangement and considered in detail the various components of the arrangement. Those who drafted the report ranked the options and made recommendations to the prime minister.

According to the report, a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation will contribute to regional stability because it will lead to a reduction of tension between the Palestinians and the Jordanians and will thereby contribute to the recruiting of foreign investments and to economic development.

The report rejects incorporating Israel in a confederation with the Palestinians, Jordan, or both. According to the report, such an arrangement might harm Israel from a security, political, and economic point of view. An independent Palestinian state, set up without any link to Jordan, might become involved in tension with Jordan.

The confederation proposed by the report is a loose unification between two political entities that maintain a joint political and economic mechanism but have independent policies.

The Israeli-Palestinian agreement states that the negotiations on the permanent arrangement will start as soon as possible, but no later than the third year of the interim period, which begins with the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho. The Declaration of Principles determined the issues to be discussed in the negotiations on the permanent settlement. Israel and the PLO agreed that the accords achieved during the interim period will not influence the outcome of the negotiations on the permanent arrangement.

Netanyahu Said 'Weakening' Negotiating Position

TA2912194093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Appearing in the Knesset plenum today, Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu presented a document which he alleges includes Israeli maps and proposals made by Israel to the Palestinians in the Cairo talks. According to Netanyahu, in the document Israel is offering the Palestinians complete cooperation in checking those passing through the crossing points, and is willing to fly the PLO flag next to the Israeli flag.

Regarding Jericho, Netanyahu claims Israel is offering the Palestinians access to the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, as well as an extended area of control.

Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that Minister David Liba'i answered that at this stage there is no agreement and that Israel and the PLO are still trying to work out understandings. Minister Hayim Ramon said Netanyahu uncovered positions which were not even approved, and by so doing is weakoning Israel's position in the negotiations.

IDF Kills 3 'Terrorist' Infiltrators on Border

TA3012053593 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Report by Alan Ben-'Ami]

[Text] The Israeli Army spokesman has just issued some very brief details about a clash between Israeli soldiers and terrorists on the border with Lebanon in the eastern sector of the security zone. According to the first details, three terrorists were killed in the clash as they tried to cross the border fence near the village of Arajah in the eastern sector. It is approximately in the area of Kibbutz Dan in the Upper Galilee region.

Israeli soldiers were alerted to the infiltration attempt, arrived quickly at the scene and opened fire at the terrorists, killing them. There are no reports of any casualties on the Israeli side, and apparently the head of Northern Command, Major General Yitzhaq Mordekhay, has arrived at the scene to check out the situation, and has already praised the action of the soldiers, and particularly their speedy arrival at the site of the infiltration.

Two Soldiers Wounded in Gaza Strip Ambush

TA3012080993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Text] Two soldiers were wounded in an attack in downtown Gaza. One of the soldiers sustained what were called light to moderate wounds while the other received scratches. Two military vehicles came under fire in a terrorist ambush. One of the passengers was shot and the other was hit by glass shards. The shot soldier was rushed by helicopter to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba. The assailant managed to flee. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] closed the area and started a manhunt.

Lower House Listens to Statement on Peace Talks

JN2912141093 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Excerpts] The House of Representatives held a closed-door session this morning under the chairmanship of Speaker Tahir al-Masri and in the presence of Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali and the ministers.

The following is a report by Jamal al-'Abbadi, our parliamentary affairs correspondent, on the open part of the session:

[Begin recording] [Passage omitted] The House listened to a statement prepared by the government on the peace negotiations and Jordan's policy toward them, as well as the stages reached in these negotiations. This came in response to a request by the deputies to discuss this issue.

The prime minister asked the House to convene a closed-door session during which a lengthy discussion took place on whether to convene a closed or an open session. A number of deputies participated in the discussion. Speaker Tahir al-Masri said this is a government decision that cannot be questioned and needs no endorsement.

Speaker al-Masri presented the issue of a closed session for voting. The majority of the House voted in favor of holding a closed session. The House then listened to the government statement. [end recording]

Deputies Cited on Closed Session

JN3012082693 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 30-31 Dec 93 p 1

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter Ayman al-Safadi]

[Text] Amman—The government and the Lower House of Parliament Wednesday [29 December] discussed Jordan's stand on the Arab-Israeli peace process and the progress it has achieved.

Parliamentary sources said Prime Minister 'Abd al-Salam al-Majali briefed the House on Jordan's stand on the 26-month-old negotiations, coordination among Arab parties to the peace talks and Jordanian-Palestinian relations.

Lawmakers said Dr. al-Majali responded to questions raised by more than 40 deputies on almost "all issues" related to the peace talks during the session, which was held behind closed doors at the request of the prime minister.

While many deputies described Dr. al-Majali's two-hour statement and responses to the deputies' questions as "detailed, frank and candid," at least one parliamentarian said the session did not add anything new to what he already knows about the peace process.

"The session did not add anything new... it did not reveal more than you read at newspapers," said islamic Action Front (IAF) Deputy Hammam Sa'id.

"The session was comprehensive, and (Dr. al-Majali's) answers were frank," said a member of the independent bloc in the House, 'Abd-al-Razzaq Tubayshat.

Sources said that in his statement, Dr. al-Majali reiterated Jordan's commitment to a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict and explained the basic principles that govern Jordan's policy on the peac process.

House Speaker Tahir al-Masri told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that Dr. al-Majali also focused on Jordanian-Palestinian relations and gave a thorough description of the draft economic agreement between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Sources said Dr. al-Majali told the House that there were no differences between the Kingdom and the PLO, and the draft agreement on economic relations, which was drafted in September and revised in October and November, was not signed because the PLO was preoccupied with other issues.

Sources said Dr. al-Majali told the House that the PLO explained its position to Jordan and requested the delay in signing the draft agreement, which was reached in Amman.

Deputies said the House and the government would resume their debate of the peace process at an unspecified date so that deputies can respond to Dr. al-Majali.

The "general discussion," during which Dr. al-Majali also briefed deputies on the outcome of the visit of Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', was requested by lawmakers earlier this month after they described as common knowledge a briefing given by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal al-Hasan.

Some deputies had argued against holding the session in camera saying the people had the right to learn about progress in the peace process, but a majority of deputies voted it be held in secret when Mr. al-Masri put the issue to vote.

Banks Asked To Delay Reopening of West Bank Branches

JN2912082393 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 29 Dec 93 p 3

[By a JORDAN TIMES staff reporter]

[Text] Amman—The government is holding off giving the green signal to commercial banks to reopen their branches in the occupied West Bank in response to a request for a delay from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), officials and banking sources said Tuesday [28 December].

They said the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) recently told the banks to await further instructions after informing them earlier this month to prepare the groundwork for reopening the branches, closed after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

The PLO argument behind the request for a delay, according to the sources, was that the organisation's leadership was too preoccupied with thrashing out differences with Israel in the implementation of the Sept. 13 autonomy accord to review a draft economic accord with Jordan.

"Once the pressure goes down, Chairman (Yasir) 'Arafat could seriously look at the draft and move forward in ratifying it," said a Palestinian source.

At the same time, Jordan is also apprehensive that if a vacuum is left in the occupied territories, with no Arab monetary authority and banks, Israeli banks might try to exploit it at the expense of the Kingdom. One fourth to one third of Jordan's currency is in circulation among the two million Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The request for the delay was conveyed to Jordan by the Palestinian ambassador in Amman, al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim.

Sources described as very ordial a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister Ma'n Abu-Nuwar and Mr. 'Abd-al-Rahim on Dec. 20 when the issue was discussed.

CBJ Governor Muhammad al-Sa'id al-Nabulsi told Parliament members Monday that the government had not formally endorsed an agreement reached with Israel on reopening the branches.

Dr. al-Nabulsi refrained from commenting on the political dimensions of the issue and limited his comments to the technical, monetary aspects and policies.

The CBJ is planning to allow all the closed branches to reopen rather than initially allowing one branch of each of the seven or eight banks which used to operate in the West Bank.

The Jordan-Israel accord provides for CBJ control and supervision of the banks according to Jordanian laws and regulations.

The extent of Israeli role will be limited to granting an approval for licence applications which already have CBJ endorsement; the banks will be required to send periodic reports to the Bank of Israel.

Dr. al-Nabulsi has said that there is no linkage between the draft economic agreement between Jordan and the PLO and the reopening of the banks.

Negotiations between Jordan and Israel on reopening the banks began more than one year ago, much before Israel and the PLO worked out their secret Oslo accord which led to the Sept. 13 Declaration of Principles, officials say.

At the same time, analysts note that a Jordan move to reopen the banks, in line with the agreement with Israel while the Jordan-PLO draft accord remains unratified, might have negative effects on political coordination between Jordan and the organisation in the context of the peace process.

Palestinian economic planners in the occupied West Bank say that once the self-rule arrangement takes effect as and when Israel and the PLO settle their differences in the implementation of the Sept. 13 accord, Jordan will have to negotiate a separate banking agreement with the self-rule authority.

There was no explanation why the Kingdom will have to have a separate agreement since the draft economic accord with the PLO provides for CBJ control of the monetary and banking affairs in the occupied territories in coordination with the Palestinians.

No official was immediately available for comment.

Lack of 'Genuine' Arab Coordination Lamented

JN2812121793 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 28 Dec 93 pp 1, 25

[Editorial: "Coordination That Has Not Materialized"]

[Text] Since the Madrid conference, and during all major events that took place since, including the Washington talks and the Oslo agreement and its consequences, Jordan has been the most outspoken advocate of coordination among the Arab parties to the peace process. Jordan has also been outspoken in its warnings against the dangers of having any separate deals with the enemy. Jordan has unfailingly affirmed that separate deals cannot serve any party, but will harm all Arabs and all their issues.

Amman and Damascus have dealt bravely with all the loud whispers that were intended to be heard by all ears about the possibility of arriving at a separate agreement between Jordan or Syria and the Zionist enemy. They not only denied the contents of such whispers, they also warned against using them as a cover to justify a separate deal by any party. Neither the Zionist enemy nor the United States can be dissociated from the fabrication of news and rumors which would deepen mistrust among Arab parties and weaken whatever confidence has remained among them so as to push one party or more toward the enemy for fear that it might be left behind by other parties.

What we are witnessing now confirms what we have been talking about. All our frustrations about the absence of a just peace are the natural outcome of the absence of Arab coordination. When we say coordination, we mean genuine coordination, not just warm handshakes, generous kisses, smiles, and gentle words, after which each party would go in different directions. Meanwhile, the enemy would be happily watching this Arab "coordination," which does not rise to the level of the required coordination among these parties.

It is not too late. However, it is regrettable that the position of this or that Arab party is seen as an obstacle to receiving splendid gains from the enemy, while in fact the enemy wants to give nothing and seeks to deprive us even of the right to dream.

King Visits Army Divisions, Special Forces

JN3012095493 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn, supreme commander of the Armed Forces, accompanied by Staff General 'Abd-al-Hafiz Mar'i al-Ka'abinah, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, this morning visited the Third Royal Armored Division, the Special Forces, and the Fifth Royal Armored Division. His majesty listened to a military briefing by the commanders of these divisions on the duties and tasks assigned to them. His majesty met with officers in these divisions.

[Begin King Husayn recording] The Jordanian Armed Forces will remain, God willing, at the forefront. I do not need to reiterate what each one of you knows as he evaluates his performance at the end of each day or long night. The consciences are alive and will always remain so with God's help. All of you are aware of your responsibilities and duties.

The brothers in the Special Forces play a big role in other parts of this disturbed world. In all cases, members of the Special Forces and the Jordanian Army are a source of our pride. The reputation of this army, thanks to continued efforts, has transcended the region to the world through people's interaction with the members of this army and with those who represent us here and there throughout the world. These opportunities gave the youths an chance to perform their duties and shoulder their responsibilities in a way that could have been different had they remained with us all the time. They have been given the opportunity to know the world and be exposed to problems and tragedies. Our tragedies are part of these tragedies and the challenges we are facing are part of the challenges the people in this world are facing. [end recording]

Muslim Brotherhood Dismisses Former Spokesman

JN2812082993 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 28 Dec 93 p 25

[Text] Amman—AL-RA'Y—The Muslim Brotherhood has decided to dismiss [its former spokesman] Ziyad Abu-Ghanimah and to end his organizational relationship with it.

Advocate 'Abd-al-Majid al-Dhunaybat, Muslim Brotherhood deputy controller general, said that the decision came as a result of Abu-Ghanimah's repeated organizational violations and his insistence on rejecting the Muslim Brotherhood's decisions and instructions.

Mu'tah Trial Continues; Sessions Detailed

JN2812132693 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 24 Dec 93 pp 1, 20

[By Khulud al-Ja'uni]

[Text] Amman—Continuing the Mu'tah case trial, Muhammad Mihyar, defense counsel for the first defendant, presented his case at the State Security Court's public session that was chaired by military judge Colonel Hafiz Amin and with judges Tayil al-Raqqad and Fawwaz al-Buqur as members. A large crowd attended the session.

In conclusion, Lawyer Mihyar asked the court to acquit the defendants of the charges of which they are accused.

Lawyer Jawad Yunus, counsel for the defense of the second to the eighth defendants, and Lawyer 'Umar Damrah, counsel for the defense of the third defendant [as published], asked for an adjournment so that they can submit their cases.

Yesterday's session was attended by four Egyptian lawyers. They said they had come to present the case for the defense on behalf of the first defendant, a member of the al-Tahrir Party, at the request of his brother and on behalf of the Arab human rights organization, and as volunteer lawyers from the Egyptian Bar.

Major Muhannad Hijazi, State Security prosecutor, objected to this while Lawyer Muhammad Mihyar, defense counsel for the first defendant, invited the Egyptian lawyers to present his client's case. However, Lawyer Salih al-'Armuti, counsel for the defense for the defendants with the exception of the third defendant, said: While I hold the guests in complete esteem, if they wish to plead I will announce my withdrawal from the case.

Lawyer 'Umar Damrah, counsel for the defense for the third defendant, also strongly opposed this. He said: I do not accept that lawyers other than myself plead on behalf of my client and I will not attend the session if they do. I reiterate my respect for them, but I will not accept such a thing.

The Egyptian lawyers are: Mahmud Riyad, Kamil Ghandur, 'Abd-al-Halim Mansur, and Muhammad al-Asmar.

The president of the court then adjourned the session until next Wednesday to listen to the defense cases submitted by lawyers Jawad Yunus and 'Umar Damrah.

Yemen's Abu-Shawarib Thanks King for Efforts

JN2912132193 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister Mujahid Abu-Shawarib left Amman at noon today at the end of a three-day visit to Jordan during which he delivered a message from the fraternal Yemeni leadership to His Majesty King Husayn.

Before departure, the Yemeni official spoke to reporters on the results of his visit.

[Begin Abu-Shawarib recording] I thank and appreciate His Majesty King Husayn and all the brothers in Jordan for the attention and great care they have shown and their readiness to help us in resolving the Yemeni crisis. The spirit with which I was received here, both during my meeting with his majesty the king and with the officials in sisterly Jordan showed that the world is still in good shape as long as we take care of each others' problems and issues. I found great understanding by his majesty the king, and I was eager to provide him with a true picture of the situation in Yemen. He understood the situation, and showed readiness to play a great and positive role in helping us to emerge from this crisis. He also expressed readiness to send any Jordanian officials to help in making arrangements for the expected meeting between the brother [Yemeni] president and the brother vice president. God willing we will prepare for this meeting, and God willing, his majesty the king will honor us by patronizing this meeting, and that what will be agreed on will be signed under the patronage of his majesty the king. I, and the Yemeni people, are grateful to his majesty the king and our brothers in Jordan, who have acted in a fraternal and sincere spirit. [end recording]

Germany Presents Offer To Write Off Debts

JN2912083893 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 29 Dec 93 p 3

["Special to the JORDAN TIMES" by Suhayr 'Ubaydat]

[Text] Amman—Germany is writing off DM 20 million (JD [Jordanian dinars] 9.5 million) of Jordan's debts bringing the total of debt relief Bonn extended to Amman this year to DM 29.5 million (JD 13.5 million), a senior German diplomat said Tuesday [28 December].

Matthias Meyer, counsellor at the German embassy, said that the offer, presented to the Jordanian government Monday, stipulates that 50 per cent of the amount to be written off should be spent in Jordanian dinars on environmental projects to be suggested by Jordan.

This is the second write-off this year. In October, Germany decided to relieve Jordan of DM 9.5 million (JD 4 million). This brings down Jordan's debt to Germany to DM 492.5 million (JD 213 million)." "The total debt was DM 523 million (JD 234 million)," he said.

Mr. Meyer said that a debt rescheduling agreement, covering July 1993 to February 1994 was recently accepted by both sides and could be signed very early 1994 in Bonn by the German minister of finance and Jordan's ambassador there.

"This arrangement brings the total of rescheduled debts to DM 86 million (JD 41 million)," he said.

Mr. Meyer said that Jordan "has always been in the focus of our interest and is one of the largest recipients of German aid," stressing that Jordan "will not lose money to the interest of Palestinians, (rather) we want to strengthen Jordan's importance in the whole process."

He said that Germany is currently conducting negotiations with both Jordan and the Palestinians to "see what we can do together, because the Palestinians have to be helped in the beginning by all Arabs and Jordan has good institutions in all the areas we are dealing with."

He expressed hope that there would be more Jordanian involvement in the West Bank on the non-political side. "We don't want to make it political, but regarding environmental issues, we would like to establish an environmental authority in the West Bank to be arranged in cooperation with experts from Jordan and we could finance the training the people."

In the absence of proper institutions (on the Palestinian side) to carry out the suggested projects, "there should be close cooperation between Jordanians, Palestinians, Israelis and donor countries," he said.

He said that Germany will continue to channel its aid to the Palestinians through Jordanian institutions. Current aid to Palestinian farmers in the West Bank is funnelled through the Amman Cairo Bank "and once branches of Jordanian banks are opened there, we will do it through them," he said.

German projects in the West Bank include sewage systems in Bethlehem, support for the Cooperation Union in Nabulus (which gives credit to small farmers), water treatment in al-Birah and improvement of the water distribution in Ramallah.

"We recently got a licence to drill a well in Nabulus and are planning a cleaning project in Gaza, by, for example, providing garbage trucks and finding a suitable dumping place," he said.

Mr. Meyer described the visit by Palestinian Leader Yasir 'Arafat to Bonn earlier this month as "very successful. The German people were impressed with 'Arafat and the general mood towards him was open-minded."

He said that two prominent parliamentarians from the Christian Democratic Party (the ruling party) will visit Jordan in January to "study the economic and political situation in Jordan and discuss the possibilities of future economic projects between the Palestinians, Jordan and Germany."

Mosad Linked With Plan To 'Embarrass' Syria

NC3012072693 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Text] The newspaper AL-SAFIR reports that Lebanese security authorities have uncovered a terrorist ring working for the Israeli intelligence agency, the Mosad. The ring planned to assassinate high-ranking Lebanese officials to destabilize the country and embarrass Syria ahead of the Syrian-U.S. summit.

AL-SAFIR reports that one ring member who was arrested recently was tasked with assassinating a high-ranking official. The authorities have also foiled a plan to assassinate a minister and a senior military official.

Citing well-informed sources, AL-SAFIR says the Israel agencies and another, non-Israeli, party have drawn up a plan to weaken Syria's position. They want to weaken President al-Asad's position ahead of the Geneva summit with President Clinton. So they planned to embarrass him in Lebanon.

This information follows Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's recent visit to the occupied border strip and his veiled threats against Lebanon and Syria.

'Terrorists' Said Conducting 'War of Attrition'

TA2912194693 Jerusalem New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Announcer-read report followed by Menahem Horowitz video report]

[Excerpts] Tension in the north. This morning dozens of katyusha rockets and mortar shells were fired in various sectors of south Lebanon. At least six terrorists were killed by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] gunfire. Our correspondent Menahem Horowitz reports from south Lebanon:

[Begin recording] [Horowitz] The terrorists' reaction to yesterday's Air Force attacks was sharp. IDF forces in south Lebanon reported that dozens of katyusha rockets and mortar shells were fired at various areas in the security zone. Heavy damage was caused in the Christian town of Marj 'Uyun, where cars were hit and houses damaged. [passage omitted]

Security sources say the terrorists have crossed the red lines and are trying to conduct a war of attrition against the security zone. For this purpose they have turned houses of south Lebanese residents into frontal positions. According to the sources Syria is encouraging Hizballah to operate in south Lebanon in anticipation of a possible resumption of the negotiations with Israel in mid-January. [end recording]

Further on Fighting in Security Zone

NC3012070193 Paris AFP in English 0017 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Excerpt] Sidon, Lebanon, Dec 30 (AFP)—Israeli troops and tanks were on the move inside Israel's "security zone" in southern Lebanon late Wednesday [29 December] after 36 hours of artillery duels between Israeli and attacking pro-Iranian Hizballah forces, Lebanese security sources reported.

They said the troop movements were concentrated in the western sector of the zone in Bint Jubayl, with four helicopters carrying out aerial surveillance.

The sources added that Hizballah was likewise maintaining its forces on high alert late Wednesday, appealing to partisans in local villages to report for duty.

Three Katyusha rockets were fired late Wednesday from Hizballah positions on the village of Rabb al-Thalathin, close to the Israeli-Lebanese border, sources from the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army said.

The rockets, which caused no injuries, disturbed an uneasy calm that returned to southern Lebanon midday Wednesday after fighting broke out at dawn Tuesday.

Earlier Wednesday Hizballah defied Israel with more rocket attacks on its forces in southern Lebanon—despite Israeli air strikes and ground fighting that since Tuesday has killed three guerrillas, wounded three and left six civilians hurt, according to local sources.

Hizballah on Wednesday fired three Katyushas at the town of Marj 'Uyun, the headquarters of Israeli soldiers and their allied militiamen of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) who jointly patrol the Israeli-imposed security zone.

The guerrillas on Tuesday hurled 60 Katyushas and as many shells into the occupied zone and, in the early hours of Wednesday, launched artillery attacks on 20 SLA positions in the region. [passage omitted]

Paper Accuses Rabin of Undermining Resolve

JN2912080693 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 29 Dec 93

[From the press review]

[Text] AL-BA'TH discusses the latest Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon, calling such acts of aggression a lever Israel uses every time it finds itself cornered domestically or externally.

The bestial raids launched by Israel against the defenseless people of southern Lebanon and their property fit the pattern of open, belligerent policies. These confirm the Rabin government's rejectionist approach to all Middle East peacemaking efforts.

AL-BA'TH goes on: Israel uses stepped-up terror and repression in the occupied Palestinian territory and in southern Lebanon to consolidate occupation and wriggle its way out of the requirements for a settlement. Israel then goes on to level groundless accusations at Syria to undermine its resolve and clear position on the peace process, which is based on international legitimacy and UN resolutions.

Rabin levels false accusations at Syria under feeble excuses. He wants to quell national resistance, ignoring the fact that it is a legitimate right for any people whose land is under occupation and that only after the underlying causes of occupation end will resistance stop.

Israel is trying its hardest to frustrate the peacemaking efforts and is playing for time, but it cannot have its own way forever. This is because a just and comprehensive peace is a global as well as regional concern, AL-BA'TH concludes.

Geneva Summit 'Most Important' Event in 1994

JN2812071493 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 28 Dec 93

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Syria's Role Before, After Geneva Summit," AL-THAWRAH says: As the world prepares to receive a new year, the Geneva summit between Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Bill Clinton mid-January is the focus of international attention. The world has welcomed the summit, hoping that 1994 will be a year of peace, stability, and security for the Middle East.

AL-THAWRAH says the Geneva summit will be the most important international political event in the new year. The summit crowns unceasing Syrian and U.S. efforts to make the peace process succeed and achieve its objectives.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: After more than two years since it was launched, the peace process has proven to be integral on all fronts. Its tracks cannot be separated. Any such attempt will be doomed to fail, as happened to the Gaza-Jericho agreement.

PUK Leader Meets Khaddam, Opposition Figures

NC2812171093 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam received brother Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], in Damascus yesterday. The talks dealt with the political situation and current developments in Kurdistan, Iraq, and the region. Khaddam and brother Talabani assessed the activities of the Iraqi opposition and the ways to promote these activities and unify the opposition ranks. The meeting was attended by the PUK representative in Syria.

During his stay in Syria, brother Talabani held a series of meetings with representatives of the Iraqi opposition national and Islamic forces. He also met with ranking opposition figures. The talks touched on the need to promote cooperation and coordination within the opposition ranks.

Afghanistan

Decree Reverses Communist Land Distribution

LD2812215093 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] The press office of the Presidency reported to us that a decree of esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA], on the revocation of the law of regulating land relations [da zmaki monasebat], the rehabilitation of the rights of the original owners of land, and the requisition of the distributed land whose ownership had either been revoked or disrupted after 7 Sawr 1357 [28 April 1978] by legal documents of the regime of that time, has been issued with the following text:

In the name of God the compassionate, the merciful:

Article I

With adherence to principles of the distinguished religion of Islam, this decree is being issued to rehabilitate the lost rights of the original owners of land and to remove the problems that have been caused by Decree No. 8 of the then revolutionary council and the implementation of the related annexes, by the law of regulating land relations dated 15 Dalw 1366 [4 February 1987], published in issue No. 685 of the Official Gazette, and other decrees and by the implementation of the orders related to land distribution.

Article II

The following action should be taken regarding a person who was previously considered entitled and who acquired land under documents mentioned in Article I of this decree:

1. If the distributed land was the property of persons, that land should be returned to the original owner or his legal representative, and, in case of death, to the legal heirs of the dead person.

2. If the distributed land was state property, the person who had previously acquired land is obliged to pay the state the price of the land in five equal yearly installments as its price was at the time it was acquired based on the price of adjoining land or the price of the land of the local people. The person who acquires the land will be considered the owner of the land after the payment of the last installment.

Article III

The following action should be taken regarding a person whose land had been previously requisitioned as ultra quorum and no action has yet been taken for its distribution:

1. If the land is in its original form, it should be returned to its original owner, his legal representative, or to the legal heir of the dead person.

2. If the state has built agricultural farms or public utility buildings and installations on the land, it is necessary for the state to pay the price of the land in five equal yearly installments to its original owner, his legal representative, or the heir of the dead person as it was at the time of the requisition on the basis of the price of the adjoining land or the price of the land of the people in whose area the land is situated. While the price of the land is being determined, its original form will be taken into account, not the value added to it by farming, buildings, or installations.

3. If land is under an urban master plan, in this respect action will be taken in line with the orders of the related laws.

Article IV

A person who, under documents enshrined in Article No. I of this decree, has obtained land previously, and has utilized it as property-owner against legal documents enforced at the time—the following actions should be taken:

1. If the property of the person who has previously obtained land, his legal embodiment or his legal heirs have implemented the transfer of property—the legal embodiment who has received the land or the legal heirs of the dead are duty-bound to pay the current price of land at the date of its return to its true owner, his legal embodiment or the legal heirs of the dead.

2. If the utilization of land by persons included in this article's first paragraph has caused the change in form of the landed property and a decrease in value, the delinquent, his legal embodiment or the legal heirs of the dead are duty-bound to return the land to its true owner, his legal embodiment and—in case of death—to the legal heirs of the dead and should compensate for losses incurred.

Article V

Land included in the landed area under the quorum of a person that has been exchanged with another person's landed quorum—or with surplus land quorum—and has been allocated to the state public utility projects and has been distributed to other people, the following actions will be taken:

1. If the exchanged land is needed by the state, it is necessary that the price of land should be paid to the person whose surplus quorum land has been exchanged and has been utilized, or to his legal embodiment and—in case of death—to the legal heirs of the dead according to the land price at the date of return or in line with the land price of the local people where the land is located.

2. If the exchanged land has been distributed to people and utilization has taken place by one side or both sides at the exchange, the following actions should be observed:

3. In situations mentioned in paragraph 1 and 2 of this article, a person, who occupies land illegally, is not entitled to any kind of compensation for losses incurred.

Article XIV

Administrative institutions, state firms, municipalities, and companies cannot build buildings or installations on agricultural land without the formal agreement of the Ministry of Agriculture's property and land affairs department and the approval of the authorized sources.

Article XV

The property and land affairs department of the Ministry of Agriculture is duty-bound to issue regulations, bylaws, and instructions for effective implementation of this decree.

Article XVI

This decree comes into force after receiving the president's assent, and will be published in the Official Gazette. With the enforcement of this decree, provisions of the law of regulating land relations dated 15 Dalw 1366 [4 February 1987] and published in issue 658 of the Official Gazette, Decree No. 8 of the then revolutionary council and other legal documents, whose provisions are against the provisions of this decree, are abrogated.

[Signed] Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan

India

Paper Criticizes New Agreement With EC

BK2912013993 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 22 Dec 93 p 8

[Editorial: "India-EC Accord"]

[Text] Against the background of the conclusion of the unequal Uruguay round to which the Government has committed this country, it may appear that India's new agreement on partnership and development with the European Community (EC) represents an advance over GATT with respect to trade with Europe. This is not so. There are no concessions with respect to duties, or quota relaxations under the multi-fibre agreement (which has secured a 10-year lease), or a softening of patents. Nor is the generalised system of preferences, for duty-free imports from the developing countries, being widened in favour of India. On these tangible issues, the India-EC accord breaks no new ground. Relations between Europe and this country will be governed by the most-favoured-nation clause under GATT. This means Europe can grant no more to India than what it gives other countries.

The accord secures that as a result of ongoing liberalisation, larger imports, as also private investment, notably in energy and telecommunications (so far dominated by the public sector) flow into India from Europe. It is not clear if European investment will establish manufacturing facilities in key high-tech areas or merely create outposts for assembling imports. India's foreign investment strategy does not set out the desired end-results. As of now, liberalisation is all about import-led growth, without any particular stress on foreign investment being geared to making Indian manufactures competitive abroad. Perhaps the accord will result in a better European understanding of this country's constraints. This is where the proposed joint commission to establish priorities will be helpful. However, this hope needs to be tempered with caution: priorities cannot be managed with the kind of market-oriented growth strategy that the Government of this country is seeking to deepen.

Even so, the accord, the third with EC since 1973, will be welcomed as a reflection of Europe's increasing interest in India. European interest in Asia has been largely confined to China so far. America is the largest private investor in India, but its attention appears to be focussed on China. Despite the Asian Development Bank's interest in this country, the growth of Japanese investment in India has been tardy. If European investment does indeed rise as a consequence of the facilitation provided by the India-EC accord, perhaps the US will take a closer look at investment opportunities in this country. The problem is that the Indian economy does not provide a large market for very many products; the exceptions being telecommunications and power, in which European and American giants are interested. For the rest, droplets of foreign investment in niche areas is about all that can be expected. This will hardly result in the kind of productivity breakthrough that the policy-makers are hoping for.

Commentary Charges Pakistan With Terrorism

BK3012071793 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Commentary by Brij Bharadwaj]

[Text] The indictment of Pakistani intelligence agency, ISI [Inter Service Intelligence], by the U.S. House Committee for aiding and abetting terrorism in India, particularly in the state of Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and the Terai region of Uttar Pradesh, has only confirmed what has been obvious to any watcher of the political scene in Southeast [as heard] Asia. The bulk of evidence produced in terms of huge recovery of arms, including sophisticated weapons like rocket launchers, communication sets, land mines as well as rifles fitted with night vision devices, could not have come from private sources as was being made out by Pakistan. The quantity of arms recovered has been so large that they could have met the need of a few battalions. It is well-known that the arms recovered is not even a fraction of what has been provided by the Pakistani agencies. In addition, the ISI has been running camps regularly for training of militants and helping them to cross borders by providing cover in the shape of firing and other means.

Afghanistan

Decree Reverses Communist Land Distribution

LD2812215093 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 28 Dec 93

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Article II

The following action should be taken regarding a person who was previously considered entitled and who acquired land under documents mentioned in Article I of this decree:

1. If the distributed land was the property of persons, that land should be returned to the original owner or his legal representative, and, in case of death, to the legal heirs of the dead person.

2. If the distributed land was state property, the person who had previously acquired land is obliged to pay the state the price of the land in five equal yearly installments as its price was at the time it was acquired based on the price of adjoining land or the price of the land of the local people. The person who acquires the land will be considered the owner of the land after the payment of the last installment.

Article III

The following action should be taken regarding a person whose land had been previously requisitioned as ultra quorum and no action has yet been taken for its distribution:

1. If the land is in its original form, it should be returned to its original owner, his legal representative, or to the legal heir of the dead person.

2. If the state has built agricultural farms or public utility buildings and installations on the land, it is necessary for the state to pay the price of the land in five equal yearly installments to its original owner, his legal representative, or the heir of the dead person as it was at the time of the requisition on the basis of the price of the adjoining land or the price of the land of the people in whose area the land is situated. While the price of the land is being determined, its original form will be taken into account, not the value added to it by farming, buildings, or installations.

3. If land is under an urban master plan, in this respect action will be taken in line with the orders of the related laws.

Article IV

A person who, under documents enshrined in Article No. I of this decree, has obtained land previously, and has utilized it as property-owner against legal documents enforced at the time—the following actions should be taken:

1. If the property of the person who has previously obtained land, his legal embodiment or his legal heirs have implemented the transfer of property—the legal embodiment who has received the land or the legal heirs of the dead are duty-bound to pay the current price of land at the date of its return to its true owner, his legal embodiment or the legal heirs of the dead.

2. If the utilization of land by persons included in this article's first paragraph has caused the change in form of the landed property and a decrease in value, the delinquent, his legal embodiment or the legal heirs of the dead are duty-bound to return the land to its true owner, his legal embodiment and—in case of death—to the legal heirs of the dead and should compensate for losses incurred.

Article V

Land included in the landed area under the quorum of a person that has been exchanged with another person's landed quorum—or with surplus land quorum—and has been allocated to the state public utility projects and has been distributed to other people, the following actions will be taken:

1. If the exchanged land is needed by the state, it is necessary that the price of land should be paid to the person whose surplus quorum land has been exchanged and has been utilized, or to his legal embodiment and—in case of death—to the legal heirs of the dead according to the land price at the date of return or in line with the land price of the local people where the land is located.

2. If the exchanged land has been distributed to people and utilization has taken place by one side or both sides at the exchange, the following actions should be observed:

a. If the exchange has occurred from one side, the right of the person who has suffered a loss is to be compensated from the returned rights of the occupier.

b. If the exchange has taken place by both sides, the losses suffered by one side could be compensated by the person by whom the occupation of the land has taken place against the law.

Article VI

The Ministry of Agriculture's department regulating land affairs and ownership, will act as the first budget unit and is duty-bound to prepare the organization and budget in the capital and provinces in accordance with their needs.

Article VII

1. The Ministry of Agriculture's department of land reform and land affairs management is duty-bound to prepare relevant forms and documents concerning land affairs and ownership and distribute them to relevant departments.

2. If in line with the documents included in paragraph one of this article, a case is not resolved, the relevant commission could take necessary action through utilizing the offices of relevant sources, visiting the area, or taking information from people with joint land borders and the local people where the land is located.

Article VIII

The following commissions will be set up to resolve the problems caused by the implementation of the legal documents mentioned in Article I of this decree or by returning land to the original owner, his legal representative, or his heirs.

1. The district's commission on regulating property and land.
2. The province's commission on regulating property and land.

Article IX

1. The district commission on property and regulating land affairs is made up of members from a) the head of the district property department as a head; b) the district's promotion department and representatives of the Ministry of Water and Electricity, and the administration's geology and cartography surveying team [as heard].

2. The provincal commission on the settlement of property and regulating land affairs is made of members from a) the head of the provincial department of property and regulating land affairs as a head; b) the provincial promotion department and representatives of the Finance, Water, and Electricity Ministries and the administration's geology and cartography surveying team.

Article X

Commissions on property and regulating land affairs have the following duties and authority:

1. To conduct a detailed survey of persons and state property, and to determine the boundary of the land;

2. To implement documents related to land and property in an area;

3. To settle land matters in line with credible documents and the information of relevant sources or in line with utterances of the adjoining landowner or the people located in the area where the land is situated;

4. To determine the price difference of land and to compensate for the losses incurred on the basis of relevant sources' information and the utterance of the owners of adjoining land or the people located in the area where the land is situated;

5. To bring lawsuits related to property and regulating land affairs to the appropriate courts for settlement;

6. To discharge other assigned duties regarding regulations, bylaws, and instructions.

Article XI

A person who is recognized as the original landowner whose land cannot be returned to him due to his absence, a representative will be appointed to protect the absent landowner and, in consultation with the property and land affairs regulating administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, the property and interests of the absent landowner.

Article XII

In order to restore the rights of those original owners whose ownership has been rescinded or disrupted as a result of the implementation of legal documents that are mentioned in Article I of this decree, the distribution of state land useable for agriculture will be suspended until the law of property and land regulation comes into force.

Article XIII

If state's or persons' land has been or is being distributed, against the principle of Islamic law, to persons such as commanders, refugees, or other citizens of the country by orders of state and jihadi organizations sources, the following action will be observed:

1. If land is the property of persons, it will be returned to the original owner, his legal representative, and, in case of death, to his legal heir.

2. If land is part of state property or it is not the property of the original owner or legal heir who is mentioned in paragraph 1 of this article, the land will be registered as state property, and in line with the provisions of Article XII of this decree, can only be utilized by the state.

3. In situations mentioned in paragraph 1 and 2 of this article, a person, who occupies land illegally, is not entitled to any kind of compensation for losses incurred.

Article XIV

Administrative institutions, state firms, municipalities, and companies cannot build buildings or installations on agricultural land without the formal agreement of the Ministry of Agriculture's property and land affairs department and the approval of the authorized sources.

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[Signed] Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan

India

Paper Criticizes New Agreement With EC

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Even so, the accord, the third with EC since 1973, will be welcomed as a reflection of Europe's increasing interest in India. European interest in Asia has been largely confined to China so far. America is the largest private investor in India, but its attention appears to be focussed on China. Despite the Asian Development Bank's interest in this country, the growth of Japanese investment in India has been tardy. If European investment does indeed rise as a consequence of the facilitation provided by the India-EC accord, perhaps the US will take a closer look at investment opportunities in this country. The problem is that the Indian economy does not provide a large market for very many products; the exceptions being telecommunications and power, in which European and American giants are interested. For the rest, droplets of foreign investment in niche areas is about all that can be expected. This will hardly result in the kind of productivity breakthrough that the policy-makers are hoping for.

Commentary Charges Pakistan With Terrorism

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[Commentary by Brij Bharadwaj]

[Text] The indictment of Pakistani intelligence agency, ISI [Inter Service Intelligence], by the U.S. House Committee for aiding and abetting terrorism in India, particularly in the state of Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and the Terai region of Uttar Pradesh, has only confirmed what has been obvious to any watcher of the political scene in Southeast [as heard] Asia. The bulk of evidence produced in terms of huge recovery of arms, including sophisticated weapons like rocket launchers, communication sets, land mines as well as rifles fitted with night vision devices, could not have come from private sources as was being made out by Pakistan. The quantity of arms recovered has been so large that they could have met the need of a few battalions. It is well-known that the arms recovered is not even a fraction of what has been provided by the Pakistani agencies. In addition, the ISI has been running camps regularly for training of militants and helping them to cross borders by providing cover in the shape of firing and other means.

The report entitled "Terrorism and Conventional Warfare" has been produced by a task force set up by the U.S. House Republican Research Committee. It has confirmed direct involvement of Pakistan in abetting and sponsoring terrorism across the border. If the committee had geared to look deeper, it could have found out how many camps have been set up for training militants from Kashmir and Punjab. The presence of some mercenaries from Afghanistan and a few free-booters from Gulf countries in terrorist ranks has also been confirmed by the committee. These elements were sent across to provide a morale booster for Kashmiri militants who, after suffering some serious setbacks in the recent past, were under pressure and some of them had even surrendered before the security forces.

The committee's findings that Pakistan which had developed the Afghan militancy to fight the jihad in Afghanistan was now diverting them toward India so that they would not create unstable conditions within Pakistan. It has also identified Brigadier Imtiaz of Pakistan Army as the mastermind behind the insurgency concept developed by the ISI. The attempts by the ISI to bring about a nexus between militants in Kashmir and Punjab also indicated their long-term plans. The Pakistani intelligence agencies however have achieved only limited success as fighting has broken out between Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front and the Hezbollah mojahedin—the armed wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami. The return of peace in Punjab and developments in Kashmir like resolving of the Hazratbal shrine crisis without firing a shot have all upset the timetable of the ISI. But they have not given up so far.

Guyanese President Seeks Joint Ventures

BK2812164293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] The visiting Guyana president has called for greater South-South cooperation to fight the unequal world trade. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi this evening, Dr. Cheddi Jagan said developing countries are losing $500 billion a year because of the high cost of imports and low prices to their products. This is 10 times the aid that they are receiving from the developed nations. On bilateral ties, Dr. Jagan said India and Guyana can cooperate in many areas including modernization of sugar industry in his country. He said his country has access to the markets in North America, Canada, Europe, and other advanced countries and this can be used by the Indian industrial and business circle to promote their exports. He said his country is looking for skilled workers and India's experience to develop its economy. Land availability, rich resources, and low-cost labor provides for excellent opportunities for India's private sector to take up joint ventures in Guyana, he added.

Four Accords Signed

BK2912135493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] India and Guyana signed four agreements in New Delhi today to further boost friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries. The first ever cultural pact for cooperation in the fields of education, art and culture, youth affairs, sports, and mass media was signed at a function in the capital. Under the three-year cultural exchange program, links between the academic institutions, interaction and exchange of artists and writers, and organizing exhibitions are envisaged. Exchange of radio and television programs also forms part of the pact. The minister of state for external affairs, Mr. Salman Khurshid, and the Guyanese foreign affairs minister, Mr. Clement Rohee, exchanged letters on waiving of visa requirements for diplomatic and official passport holders for travel between the two countries.

Pact With Nepal on Water Resources Signed

BK2812161093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] India and Nepal have reiterated their commitment to cooperate in water resources development. An action plan in this regard was signed in Kathmandu today at the end of the three-day talks by the secretary, water resources development, Dr. M.S. Reddy, and his Nepalese counterpart, Mr. S. (Mupadhya). The plan aims at expediting various activities relating to already identified water resources projects and flood control measures. The Indian side to the talks was led by the water resources minister, Mr. V.C. Shukla, while the water resources minister of Nepal, Mr. Laxman Prasad Ghimire, headed his country's delegation.

AIR [All India Radio] Kathmandu correspondent Ratan Saldi understands that a mechanism has been set up to constantly monitor the progress achieved in various projects.

Talking to newsmen, Mr. V.C. Shukla, said the forward-looking policy adopted by the two countries will enable them to enhance cooperation in other fields also. He expressed confidence that the agreements reached will promote economic prosperity and friendship between India and Nepal.

Commentary Welcomes Agreement

BK2912060393 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Commentary by Ratan Salve]

[Text] Both India and Nepal have strong conviction that the vast potential of Himalayan river waters can be harnessed to their mutual advantage through bilateral cooperation. The two sides increasingly realized that cooperation in this field is the key to development in Nepal as well as effective control of recurring flood menace in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Some decisions were taken during the Nepalese Prime Minister Mr. Girija Prasad Koirala's visit to New Delhi two years back and later the Prime Minister Mr. Narasimha Rao's visit to Kathmandu in October last year. During these visits, the two sides had agreed on a time-frame for investigation and preparation of project supports for Karnali, Pancheshwar, Sapt Kosi, Burhi Gandak, Kamla, and Bagmati projects. They had also agreed on the installation of flood forecasting and warning system, construction of flood protection embankments and on sharing of electricity. The two countries have been working sincerely on the implementation of these decisions since then. But there had been some misgivings which needed to be removed. Further, there had been some slackness on the part of Nepal after the opposition there raised a hue and cry following the signing of the Tanakpur hydroelectric power agreement with Indian in 1991.

A threadbare discussion during the last three days between the high-level delegations led by the water resources ministers of the two countries has given a fresh impetus to the task set out by the prime ministers. The talks [were] aimed at reviewing the follow-up action on their decisions and to implement them. Flexibility in the approach on the part of both the sides has resulted in the formulation of an action plan to speed up activities relating to water resources cooperation. Both India and Nepal for the first time felt the need for proper monitoring and set out a mechanism for the purpose. It is understood that the water resources secretaries of the two countries are to meet every three months followed by a half-yearly ministerial-level review of progress of various projects. The development can be termed as a real breakthrough as preparation of reports for field surveys of some of the identified projects had suffered because of lack of proper monitoring. Mr. Vidya Charan Shukla, who headed the Indian delegation to the talks, expressed confidence that the forward-looking policy followed by both countries will enable them to cooperate in other fields also. Whatever problems of development they face will be sorted out in a spirit of friendship, equality and cooperation. The existing close ties between India and Nepal are bound to strengthen further for the long-term benefit of the two countries by their cooperation in water resources.

Southern Command Adds New Ship to Fleet

BK2912091893 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1615 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] The country's off-shore vessel, INS [Indian Naval Ship] Sujata, was inducted to the Southern Naval Command at Cochin today. Commissioned last month at Visakhapatnam by the minister of state for defense, Mr. Mallikarjun, INS Sujata sailed into her home port at Kochi this morning after her maiden voyage. Measuring 102 meters in length, Sujata displaces 2,000 tonnes and is capable of speeds of around 25 knots. INS Sujata has a Bofors gun as her main armament, besides many other guns, and is fitted with modern navigational and communication systems.

Iran

Vice President Habibi Meets Japanese Ambassador

LD2912175793 Tehran IRNA in English 1720 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Tehran, Dec 29, IRNA—Japan's Ambassador to Tehran, Ohara Takeshi, today lauded Iran as an "important" country in the Middle East and said no country can ignore Tehran's significant role in consolidation of regional peace and stability.

The Japanese ambassador, who made the remark in a meeting with First Vice-President Hassan Habibi, said exchange of views between Iranian and Japanese officials was necesary in order to further strengthen political, economic and cultural relations between the two sides.

Habibi referred to the high volume of trade between the two countries and said Iran's policy was based on expansion of relations with Asian countries, especially Japan.

Underlining the role of major Middle East countries in formulating the world's new political and diplomatic order, Habibi said the present developments in the world and the Middle East were such that one could not ignore Iran's important and vital role in the region.

He underscored that Iran's foreign policy was based on strengthening relations with regional states in order to consolidate peace and stability in the Persian Gulf region.

Envoy Promotes Bilateral Ties

LD3012113793 Tehran IRNA in English 1010 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 30, IRNA—Japanese ambassador here Wednesday [29 December] hoped for further consolidation and promotion of "very good" Tehran-Tokyo ties in future. The topmost Japanese diplomat, Ohara Takeshi, expressed the hope in a meeting with head of Iran-Japan parliamentary friendship group Mohammad Reza Bahonar.

With the coming to power of the new coalition government in Tokyo, he said, all Japanese parties are doing their best to cope with the new situation. Therefore, he added, formation of a new friendship group in cooperation with Japanese parties in the near future is more likely and can be effective in upgrading bilateral ties.

Bahonar said Iran attaches special importance to its ties with Japan in all economic, cultural and political domains. Stressing that many countries have appreciated Iran's economic and political situation, he told the Japanese diplomat that Japan is a country which has employed the situation in the interest of improved bilateral cooperation with Iran.

U.S. Policy Developments in '93 Viewed

NC2912194093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Station commentary]

[Text] Many believe that the United States has managed to get through 1993 with great difficulty. Those informed about the situation believe that the United States is planning for the coming years. The political confusion in the United States now is part of this planning that Washington is preparing for. The Democrats and the American people erred when they elected Clinton president. At any rate, the United States has managed to get through 1993, although some of the developments there were the heritage left by the Republicans; among these are the events in Somalia, and confusion regarding developments in Russia. However, the United States succeeded in arranging a treaty of capitulation and bargaining in the Middle East. This treaty was more traitorous than Camp David.

When 'Arafat stood in the White House garden without his weapon, smiling and shaking Rabin's hand, many people nearly exploded with anger. Even non-Palestinians realized that the Cold War era had come to an end. Many words lost their significance.

U.S. President Clinton will have two very important meetings in the first days of 1994. The first will be with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad in Geneva. The second is with Russian President Boris Yeltsin in Moscow. The Geneva meeting is of great importance for the United States. If Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad joins [the Gaza-Jericho agreement], the future of the Gaza-Jericho agreement will be guaranteed. In addition, Israel will enter the Middle East market after making peace with Syria, thus making the old dreams of the Zionists come true. However, when Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad insists on his stands, the future of Gaza-Jericho will be like that of Camp David.

In Moscow, Clinton has to give his condolences to Yeltsin, while appeasing some people like Zhirinovsky, because developments in Russia are unpredictable. Russia needs billions in aid. Washington, however, is not comfortable about the return of its capital from that country. It also does not know what to do about the vacuum created by the collapse of the Warsaw Pact in Eastern Europe.

Therefore, more difficult and complicated days are awaiting the United States in 1994, especially since Europe, united, is economically stronger than the United States. It has numerous excellent industries. In addition, Europe believes that international economic and trade competition is better than political competition. If the United States deals with some countries, such as China, with suspicion and takes political stances and makes political remarks with respect to its bilateral relations with these countries, Europe will quickly acquire large markets in this region. All these events are not fully linked to the needs and capabilities of the democratic government in the United States because Washington's competitors have understood the international situation and are demanding their rights. Therefore, 1994 will not make all of Clinton's dreams come true.

U.S. Efforts To Arm Gulf States Viewed

NC2912105793 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 20 Dec 93 p 16

[Unattributed commentary: "The United States and the GCC Leaders"]

[Text] After several attempts against the Islamic Republic of Iran and efforts to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation among some regional countries, the U.S. statesmen who are not acquainted with the world situation have once again tried to create tension in the region by putting forth the issue of what they call the Iranian threat and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by Iran.

Within this framework, a high-ranking delegation consisting of four members of the Pentagon recently visited the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. The delegation, which was headed by the deputy secretary of defense for strategic affairs, visited occupied Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Persian Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] members and held talks with the heads of these states.

Throughout their discussions, the delegation spoke about the major threat of Iran and the expansion of fundamentalism, as well as about the Iran's manufacturing of weapons of mass destruction. The head of the delegation even said: "Iran is considered a major threat in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf in the short run, and we believe that Tehran is trying to proliferate weapons of mass destruction."

He also claimed that there is no government in Iran and that Iran supports the export of terror and religious fanaticism!

Among the extremely interesting points in the discussions was that the U.S. officials expressed their fear about the ever-expanding trend of Islamic fundamentalism; and they always couple this fear with the fear of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by Iran. This shows the depth of their fear over the Islamic awakening.

It seems that the United States is facing many problems in its efforts to place Iran at an impasse. The United States has both tried to politically isolate the Islamic Republic of Iran and to ultimately place it at an impasse. It has resorted to making many overtures to European countries on this issue.

The clear example of these efforts during the Clinton administration has been the periodic visits by Secretary of State Warren Christopher to European countries.

But despite the U.S. efforts to isolate Iran, the European countries—particularly Germany, Italy, and France—are thinking of expanding their commercial ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

For example, according to the latest published figures, Germany's crude oil imports from Iran during the first nine months of the current [Iranian] year [ending 20 March 1994] were 914 million metric tons, which is a 176 percent increase over the same period last year.

The West, especially the United States, is facing a severe economic recession. In particular, their military industry is on the verge of bankruptcy—so much so that even the presidents of these countries have personally intervened and are encouraging the Persian Gulf countries to purchase arms!

The Persian Gulf littoral states, which lack popular backing, are the best places to flood with arms, even though they do not know how to use them. And in the midst of this, what better pretext for arms sales can there be than the Iranian threat? On the eve of the GCC summit, Western news agencies have started their extensive propaganda against Iran so that more profit can be pocketed by the companies that are on the verge of bankruptcy.

The area is being armed intensively. Even though this is an extremely disturbing situation and may have grave consequences, the fact that arms amassed in the region may one day be aimed at the heart of the Zionists should also be taken into consideration.

Khamene'i Tells Assembly of Importance of Islamic Leader

LD2912212193 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Members of the Assembly of Experts on Leadership Affairs [AELA], at the end of their fourth session, met the exalted leader of the Islamic revolution, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, this morning. At that meeting, the exalted leader, in a speech, called the AELA the highest of the forums, organizations, and estabishments of the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran [IRI] and drew the attention of the AELA to the greatness and importance of the position of leader and his crucial role in guiding the Islamic community.

In explaining the important position of the Islamic leader, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i said: The leader is in reality considered the shadow and sign of the highest truth of the world of creation, that is the position of the supreme guardian and the holy messianic and Imamate position. The leader is the supervisor of the general issues of the world Islam and the general administrator of the Islamic community and conducts the correct directions that communities and governments should be aiming at and traversing. The leader is the guarantor of the Islamic direction and God's satisfaction in the general movement of executive, judicial, and legislative affairs.

The leader of the Islamic revolution, in an explanation of the differences between the characteristics of an Islamic system and those of the new and old administrative systems, said: The Islamic system cannot move in a way similar to the old despotic systems, the newly fashioned dictatorships, or systems in which absolute freedom exists to the extent of promiscuity. The Islamic system considers itself duty bound to guide humans from the darkness of sin to divine light and piety, as well as the protection of freedoms, safeguarding of dignity, and correct orientation. That is an essential and crucial duty, and none of the existing world systems consider themselves bound by it.

The exalted leader, stressing the connection between the issue of leadership and the fate of the world of Islam and the Islamic nation [umma], said: The leader, in addition to protecting human dignity and freedom, observing piety, and guiding humanity from darkness to light, must confront the bankrupt prevalent values of the dominant world powers. This calls for an untarnishable credibility according to which the words of the leader are implemented with faithfulness, enthusiasm, and love. That is the very same grave credibility whose role and effect we have thus far witnessed in the developments following the victory of the Islamic revolution.

In another part of his speech, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, referred to the source of emulation issue and said: The method of choosing a source of emulation in our Shiite community is without peer and is outstanding. In our community today there are a considerable number of prominent personalities who deserve to be sources of emulation from the point of view of religious jurisprudence, piety awareness, learning, and cleverness. They must acquire the necessary requirements to become a source of emulation according to the needs of the Islamic community not on the basis of their liking for the [position] of the source of emulation and—just like Grand Ayatollah Araki—be a divine asset for the Islamic umma. The leader of the Islamic revolution considered the possession of correct knowledge and religious jurisprudence to be necessary for a source of emulation and, explaining that import, said: Correct religious jurisprudence governs realities and, according to people's needs, one gleans this from books, tradition, and what has been put at our disposal as proper and solid proofs. Therefore, our religious jurisconsults and thinkers in religious seminaries must realise the requirements of a source of emulation in themselves through equipping themselves with correct religious jurisprudence, asceticism, and increasing divine piety. At the same time they must divest themselves of the desire to become a source of emulation. That is because we are certain that under those circumstances the existing method of selecting a source of emulation is the best method. The people also will not be misguided and will not go to those who have leanings toward the East and West.

His Eminence, Ayatollah Khamene'i, in another section of his speech, referred to the very difficult living conditions in most countries of the world and, stressing the improving situation of the economy of the state, said: Today the economic situation of many of Iran's neighbors demonstrates that our people's economic situation is far better than theirs. During the past decades no head of government has existed with the merit, capability, trustworthiness, and sincerity of Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani. We must appreciate that outstanding, beloved, and worthy personality as a great blessing from God Almighty.

The leader of the Islamic revolution considered the aim of the activities of the government and authorities in all fields to serve the people and, while stressing the need for dealing with wrongdoings and making up for probable mistakes of officials, said: The way to resolve the problems of the country, from an economic point of view, is to increase production and reduce consumption. The enemy, being aware of that point, has concentrated its policies on creating all types of obstacles and problems and all types of evil in foreign arenas as well as the propagation of smuggling and luxury goods by its internal agent. Nevertheless, the Islamic government has succeeded in resolving many of the problems and, God willing, with the people and authorities cooperating, the enemy's evil will be neutralized.

At the end of his speech, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i prayed for divine support and guidance for the propagation for the word of Islam and unity among Muslims.

Before the statement by the exalted leader, the president of the Assembly of Experts, Ayatollah Meshkini, submitted a report on the issues debated during the fourth AELA session.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani Delivers Address on Budget

LD2312201093 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1108 GMT 22 Dec 93

["Full text" of address by President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, presenting bills for the second five-year development plan and the state budget for the year 1373, beginning 21 March 1994, to the Majles in Tehran on 21 December—read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. I thank God Almighty for helping me succeed in presenting the country's second plan to the esteemed Islamic Consultative Majles. The drawing up of the state budget for the year 1373 [beginning 21 March 1994] when the second plan is undergoing its final stages of preparation has made it possible to consider the directions and tendencies of the second plan in the budget bill. Thanks to God Almighty's blessings, the 1373 budget bill is presented together with the second five-year state economic, social, and cultural plan.

During recent years, in continuation of the general policies of the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and based on the policies laid down by his eminence the imam [Khomeyni], may God be pleased with him, and the eminent leader [Khamene'i], may his blessings continue, the government has achieved significant success in domestic and foreign policies. We believe that this nation's talent and potential are capable of advancing the country's reconstruction to complete self-sufficiency. It is essential for our country to achieve that goal of self-sufficiency, despite overt and covert obstruction and hostility on the part of the world powers. In order to speed up that process, it is necessary for responsible organs to eliminate bureaucracy and leave the scene open for the further presence of the people and undertake the necessary cooperation in all fields.

On the issue of foreign policy the Islamic Republic of Iran, within the framework of the Islamic revolution goals and ideals and by observing the principles of the development and maintainance of healthy relations with other countries, has made large-scale efforts to present itself in international forums, in order to reduce tensions and establish peace and tranquillity, particularly among neighboring, Muslim, and Third World countries, and to foil mischievous acts. It has achieved considerable success along those lines despite the poisonous propaganda and obstructions of world arrogance.

Considering the problems that many of the neighboring and regional countries have been facing and the expenses that the Islamic Republic of Iran has incurred as a result of such problems, appropriate policies and solutions have been found to maintain the country's stability and tranquillity at a satisfactory level. The necessary conditions have been provided for the construction and reconstruction of damaged and deprived areas.

Attending to and helping victims of the crisis-ridden areas of the world, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Palestine, Lebanon, Caucasia, Afghanistan, and others—are among the basic principles of our foreign policy. Along the same lines, we have hosted millions of oppressed homeless people and refugees from various countries—oppressed refugees who have been deprived of the most basic human rights because of the aggression of wicked forces, while responsible world circles have remained indifferent.

On economic conditions it is necessary to refer to the international economy and its effects on our country's economy. There is no doubt that one of the effective factors in the country's economy is the situation of the world oil market. Because of the continued recession in the industrial countries that import oil and the lack of necessary agreement among the oil-producing member countries of OPEC and other producers, the oil market is facing recession; therefore it has also influenced our country's economy. Thus, during the past few years, oil-related income has dropped considerably. Dependence on oil exports is one of the basic problems of our country's economy. It is inevitable, therefore, that we make decisions and adopt basic measures—particularly to bring about a change in the country's economic structure—in order to face the effects of this problem. If the adoption of these decisions is delayed the country will face deeper and greater problems in the future.

Finally, we should be thankful to Almighty God and praise him for his kindness to us on providing us with the opportunity to make sensitive decisions and undetake basic moves in the current crisis-ridden situation in the world.

One of the special features of the second development plan is that is has incorporated those general lines of policy which have won the approval of the eminent leader [Khamene'i]. Fortunately, at the time of formulating the plan, the government was aware of all these fundamental points and thereby gave them full treatment in all the section of the plans.

It is now appropriate to glance at some of the principles, policies, methods, figures, and achievements of the first development plan, as well as the future prospects for the second plan and the budget for 1373. One of the basic policies in the first plan was to try to lessen our dependence on income generated by oil exports. This was done by substituting domestic products for imports, and developing nonoil exports. Fortunately this policy achieved considerable successes. One of the successful measures in this regard was the implementation of infrastructural projects, such as the construction of refineries, petrochemical and chemical complexes, and factories to produce and process steel, food, medicine, and other consumer and intermediate goods. At present, in numerous areas, domestic output can satisfactorily meet the country's demands.

With regard to basic commodities, such as wheat, sugar, meat, and cheese, imports have declined due to the increase in our domestic output. At the same time, policies aimed at encouraging exports have fortunately yielded positive results. Therefore, naturally it was inevitable that we should decide to continue our policy of reducing our dependence on income generated by oil exports. This policy constitutes one of our fundamental strategies, and we will pursue it in the second development plan. This strategy has also been incorporated in the budget for 1373. Among the components of this strategy, one can mention the reduction in the consumption of imported goods or goods with export potentials. We hope that gradually the import of many goods may decline as we adopt the method of substituting domestic production for them.

Furthermore, the country's budget must increasingly be related to the the nation's internal resources, and at the same time it must gradually become distanced from oil income. This can be made possible through creating a balance between a proportion of the cost of implementation of schemes pertaining to marketable goods and services on the one hand, and the income which can be generated by the sale of such services and goods on the other. It is due to the implementation of this strategy that fluctuations in the price of oil can no longer plunge our economy into severe crisis. This is because the desirable growth in the nonoil exports, together with substitution of many imports, and at the same time efforts to tie resources needed to implement some major projects to their own output and yield, have not only led to increase in domestic output, but have also considerably lessened the strong dependence of our economy on oil production.

One of the other fundamental policies of the first plan was to set the wheels of the economy in motion through adopting a set of economic policies under the general heading of economic adjustment policies. Within the framework of the main axes of economic adjustment policies, which were pursued during the period of the first plan, one can mention the following points: rejuvenation of the price mechanism in relation to allocation of economic resources; removal of many obstacles and restrictions affecting production, in particular administrative restrictions; the shifting of subsidies toward the production sector, especially the agricultural sector; the transformation of latent subsidies into apparent and open ones; and the steering of state assistance, in the shape of direct assistance, toward society's low-income strata. During the coming years, the implementation of such policies will continue.

In order to consolidate the achievement of the economic adjustment policies, stabilize the country's economy, and finally reduce the impact of the implementation of economic transformation policies upon society, economic stabilization policies will also be attended to by the government during the coming years. Within the framework of economic stabilization policies, the following aspects will be emphasized:

1. Utilization of financial and fiscal axes. In this field, increase in income generated by taxation, control over the growth of volume of liquidity, and increase in the efficiency of the procedures by which public resources are utilized. Furthermore, emphasis will be placed on financial discipline, as well as on making economies in the use of current and development fund allocations, and in the use of resources belonging to state companies or companies affiliated to the state.

2. Greater attention to organizing various markets. This is because suitable organization of various markets for goods and services can play a significant role in removing obstacles and eliminating undue concentration of monopolistic power in the hands of a few strong economic agencies and organizations. This will also guarantee the creation of necessary conditions for healthy economic competition among the members of society, ultimately leading, in turn, to the growth and development of the existing markets. Special attention,

therefore, is reserved for the organization of various markets for goods, services, manpower, and capital.

3. *Reform of the bureaucratic structure. Fortunately*, during recent years, the government has invariably attended to reforming the country's bureaucratic structure, and has taken certain steps toward this end. In this connection one can mention the steps taken by the Supreme Council of Administrative Affairs in recent years to eliminate duplicity of duties of a number of organizations within the state apparatus. In the coming years, fundamental steps will be taken in a manner much more serious than before toward bringing about administrative order and discipline, improving management, increasing efficiency, and reforming the existing procedures in the government's executive organs.

Continuing the discussion on the economic, social, and cultural situation of the country, at first the record of activities during the years of the first plan will be presented and then the framework for the second economic, social, and cultural development plan and the budget for the year 1373 will be explained.

National production: In the first plan the achievement of economic growth and an increase in per capita production, productive employment, and the reduction of economic dependence were pursued as basic goals. The identification of those goals was due to the special requirements of the time when the first plan was drawn up. The continuation of the trend which existed prior to the first plan would have led to a greater increase in poverty among different strata of society. If the trend existing prior to the year 1368 [year beginning 21 March 1989] had continued, the gross domestic product on the basis of 1361 [year beginning 21 March 1982] fixed prices would have experienced an annual reduction of 1.7 percent falling to 8.6 trillion rials in the year 1371 [year beginning 21 March 1992]; while as the result of the implementation of the first plan and the extensive efforts which were made, the GDP has exceeded 12.6 trillion rials and has enjoyed and 8 percent annual growth.

Examining the rate of growth in different economic sectors shows that the greater part of the growth has been in the nonoil sectors, so much so that the GDP, excluding oil, has shown a 7.5 percent growth during the course of the plan.

In another part of his speech, presenting the articles of the second five-year plan and the national budget for 1373 to the Majles, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani continued:

Foreign trade: Correcting the foreign trade system of the country which during a period of many years had become uncompetitive compared to the outside world and had been organized on the basis of the importation of goods from abroad presented the government with a considerable challenge. If the country's trade system had not been corrected the implementation of economic reforms would not have been possible. Among the fundamental steps which have been taken one can refer to the elimination of restrictions imposed on imports and exports—excluding import duties; improvements in the laws governing imports and exports; the improvement of foreign exchange allocations; and the improvement of the customs duties system.

Certainly, a considerable time is necessary before we can witness the main results of improving the commercial system. During these years we have witnessed many positive results in this field, as the result of which the trend of rapid growth in the level of the country's imports has been controlled and nonoil exports which had always played a minor role in foreign exchange earnings have shown an average annual growth of about 30 percent. The share of nonoil exports in foreign exchange earnings of the country has increased from about 5 percent in the years preceding the plan to 16 percent in the year 1371.

In the current year the rate of growth in nonoil exports has also increased. In the first six months of the year 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993] nonoil exports showed a growth of 23.6 percent compared to the first six months of the last year. The composition of nonoil exports has been such that during the years of the plan the percentage of industrial goods has shown an increase compared to other nonoil exports throughout the duration of the plan, and reached about 37 percent of all nonoil exports in the year 1371.

Regarding imports, the change in the rate of foreign exchange, especially in the years 1371 and 1372, as well as measures adopted in order to boost domestic production which would substitute for imports, have slowed down the rate of growth of imports in the first years of the plan, to such an extent that it is anticipated that national imports will follow a downward trend from $24.9 billion in the year 1370 to less than $17 billion in the current year. It is also forecast that with the implementation of new customs duties we shall have greater success in supporting domestic products in future years.

Fiscal and credit policies, banking system, and price indices: The changes which have been implemented in the credit policies of the country have been mainly directed toward increasing the motivation for opening bank deposits and increasing the share of the nongovernmental sector in the facilities provided by the banks. This has resulted in increasing the percentage of long-term deposits, compared to all other government deposits, from 17.4 percent in 1367 [year beginning 21 March 1988] to 22 percent at the end of the month of Shahrivar 1372 [23 September 1993].

Also the elimination of administrative restrictions governing the provision of banking facilities has resulted in an increase in the rate of facilities provided by the banks to the nongovernmental sector compared to all the banking facilities provided to governmental and nongovernmental sectors, from 39.8 percent in the year 1367 to 59.6 percent in 1371.

During the years of the plan, despite the reduction in budget deficit and reduction in government borrowing from the banking system, as the result of a massive increase in bank credits which has been partly unavoidable due to financial difficulties resulting from changes in the rate of foreign exchange, the volume of cash flow [naqdinegi] has shown an average annual increase of 22.9 percent. During the years of the plan, while paying special attention to infrastructural investment, controlling the cash flow, and continuing the policy of eliminating the budget deficit, the government has not ignored the policy of supporting the low-income groups and has devoted considerable resources to this task.

The government's financial situation and the general budget: The developments in the budget and the government's financial situation may be appraised from two main aspects. The first aspect is the concordance and conformity of the budgets with the targets and policies of the plan and also the annual budget acts. One of the major problems in the implementation of budgets in the years prior to 1368 was the lack of realization of the revenues forecast in the approved budgets, as a result of which the government was forced to put forward corrections and amendments to the Majles. However, in the period of the first plan, government revenues and expenses, while conforming to the targets set out in the plan, were realized at a level very close to the figures stated in the budget acts of those years. The amount of government revenues and expenses realized in the years 1368 to 1371, compared to the figures stated in the budget acts, were 101 percent and 105 percent respectively. The second aspect is the desired changes which have been made in government revenues and expenses. Government revenues, which suffered from severe recession in the years 1364 to 1367 [21 March 1985 to 20 March 1989] and fell by an average of 6.3 percent per annum, enjoyed an annual growth of 47.4 percent in the four years of the first plan. The ratio of revenues to the GDP in the general budget rose from 9.6 percent in 1367 to 16.1 percent in 1371, which was higher than the target forecast in the first plan; that is, 15.7 percent.

The growth of government expenditure in the same period averaged 27 percent per annum. Consequently, considering the greater growth in the revenues, the government's budget deficit was reduced considerably. The ratio of deficit to total budget fell from 50.1 percent in 1367 to 1.8 percent in 1371. This could be considered as one of the most significant achievements of the government in the period of the first development plan.

The increase in tax revenue and the increase in its share in the GDP were noted as the most important revenue target. In that respect, tax revenues, which suffered severe recession in the years prior to the plan and remained constant every year, rose considerably during that period, in such a way that revenues from that source in the current year are expected to rise to more than four times the corresponding level in 1367. Thus, the tax revenues to GDP ratio rose from 4.3 percent in 1367 to 6.4 percent in 1372.

Of the most important budget targets in the first plan was the increase in the share of development allocations in the total government expenditures. In that respect, that share was expected to rise from 19.4 percent in 1367 to 28 percent in 1372. Fortunately, the performance of the annual budgets testify to the outstanding success achieved in that respect. The share of development allocations in the total government expenditures rose to 38 percent in 1372.

In the first plan infrastructural development was given priority in the allocation of development funds. That aim has been implemented in the annual budgets. The share of the infrastructural sectors in the government's development allocations has risen from 32 percent from 1361 to over 47.5 percent in 1372. Also, at present, 15 important projects are in progress, a major portion of those projects are concentrated on water, energy, transport, agriculture, industries, and mines.

Another important target which is noted is giving priority to social and cultural sectors and increasing the share of their allocations in the total current allocations. The current allocations show that the share of the current allocations for the social and cultural sectors—that is, public education and training, higher education, health and treatment, welfare and social security, and culture and arts—has risen from about 31 percent in 1367 to 36 percent in 1372.

In that respect, it should be pointed out that, with the implementation of the system of coordinated payments, the government was able to take a significant step to improve the standard of living of its employees.

Reviving and developing deprived areas and creating a regional balance are among fundamental priorities considered in the first plan. Between 1368 and 1372 over 90 billion rials were invested in the implementation of basic educational, health, and infrastructural programs and projects in the country's deprived areas and numerous job-creating projects have become operational to create job opportunities in deprived areas.

Utilizing those allocations, more than 14,000 new development projects have been implemented in deprived areas, of which the setting up of 16,000 classrooms of various educational levels, more than 600 health and treatment centers, 4,534 drinking water networks, and the construction, completion, and repair of 47,000 km of secondary and rural roads can be named.

With the implementation of those projects, within the context of educational, health, and infrastructural services, 700 villages have improved considerably, so that at present those villages have been taken off the list of deprived villages.

Extensive efforts have been made in the past few years in the reconstruction of the war damaged areas. Also due to the scale of destruction and the need to eradicate backwardness in those areas, extensive steps have been taken to build the infrastructure in those regions, and these measures will continue in the future.

At the moment, more than 530,000 war refugees have returned to their birthplaces and preparations have been made for the return of about 264,000 more people. Out of 346,000 urban or rural domestic and commercial buildings damaged as the result of the war about 212,000 units have been reconstructed, 45,000 more units are under construction and the reconstruction of the rest will begin in the near future.

In the year 1372 alone, in addition to 280 billion rials which were allocated in the government's general budget to help those who suffered losses as the result of the war, 320 billion rials more has also been devoted to national and regional reconstruction projects in the war-ravaged regions. This sum is in addition to the ordinary budget of the war-ravaged provinces. These sums will be spent mainly in the educational, health and hygiene, agriculture, roads and transportation and water sectors. At the moment, 530 national and provincial plans including more than 2,000 projects are being implemented by means of those funds in the war-ravaged areas.

Welfare, social security and government assisted plans: During the years of the First Plan one of the basic steps taken by the government was to try to improve social justice through adopting policies and plans that would support the low-income groups of the society. To this end, a considerable part of the general budget was allocated for the expansion of social insurance, health services, the provision of basic goods and direct assistance to the low-income groups in the society. In this connection, the total amount of funds allocated by the government from the general budget, which in the year 1367 amounted to 910 billion rials, was increased to 2,140 billion rials in the year 1372, i.e. it has enjoyed an annual growth rate of 19 percent. During the same years the subsidies paid for essential goods has increased from 91 billion rials in the year 1367 to 1,631 billion rials in the year 1372. This shows a considerable growth in the funds allocated for providing the public needs.

Of course, it should also be borne in mind that there has been a large amount of additional government assistance in the form of the provision of water, electricity, bread and fuel which have not been included in the sums allocated by the government in the budget. In addition, funds allocated for supporting special sectors of society such as the esteemed families of war martyrs, those covered by the Martyr Raja'i plan, Imam Khomeyni Relief Committee, and Welfare Organization, have also experienced considerable growth and have increased from 212 billion rials in the year 1367 to 1,070 billion rials in the year 1372. Consequently, each year a larger number of people have benefited from support and welfare services. For instance, at the moment, 4,600,000 people are directly covered by welfare programs.

In the field of social security also each year considerable resources from the government budget, the resources of the Social Security Organization and pension funds have been spent on these services, so much so that the total number of people covered by medical insurance has increased from about 18 million people in the year 1367 to 22 million in the current year. If one also includes the personnel of the military and security forces, banks and muncipalities and other government and public organizations that figure exceeds 26 million. In this way, 43 percent of the country's population are covered by medical insurance. In the year 1372 [1993] 76,000 workers are also covered by unemployment insurance.

In addition to these services, a bill has been drawn up for expanding medical insurance and has been submitted to the Majles. Also in order to expand social insurance to other groups in society and the achievement of universal social insurance a bill is being studied and after final review it will also be presented to the Majles.

Health and medical treatment: During the years of the First Plan major attempts were made to improve the quality of public health. For instance, the number of health centers was increased from 7,280 units in 1367 to 12,220 in the year 1372. In the year 1373 the number of health centers will be increased by a further 1,000 centers. The number of villages which during that period have been provided with healthy drinking water has exceeded 5,610. As a result, the total number of villages which have healthy drinking water has exceeded 29,500 villages. Consequently, the percentage of rural population which benefit from healthy drinking water has increased from 70 percent in the year 1367 to 84 percent in the year 1372.

It should be noted that during the same period the programs of vaccination and family planning have also enjoyed considerable growth. For instance, despite the considerable increase in the number of children, the vaccination of the children below one year of age against six preventable diseases has increased from 88 percent in 1367 to about 90 percent in the current year. In the family planning programs, the number of married women between 15 and 44 who have been covered by these programs has increased from 24 percent in the year 1367 to 46 percent in the year 1372.

Also the number of urban and rural hospitals and clinics have increased respectively from 1,402 and 1,565 in 1367 to 1,710 and 2,146 units in the year 1372. During the same period 66 new hospitals in provincial capitals and cities, 354 maternity clinics, 1,200 workers health centers providing cover for 420,000 workers have been built.

As the result of these measures, the infant mortality rate has dropped from 45 to 35 per thousand in the years 1368-1372, while the mortality of mothers while giving birth has dropped from 91 to 52 per 100,000 live births.

During the five years of the Plan about 16,000 hospital beds have been added to the total number of beds. In this way, the number of hospital beds in the country per 1,000 population which was about 1.46 percent [as heard] in the year 1367 increased to 1.54 percent in the year 1372, which is better than the target set out in the Plan.

Also the percentage of the number of doctors per 100,000 population which was 34 in the year 1367 has exceeded 50 in the year 1372. The number of university teaching staff in medical fields has increased from about 4,000 in the year 1367 to 7,400 in the year 1372; and the number of specialized and post-doctoral paramedics has increased by 160 percent. During the same period about 100 research projects have been completed in the medical faculties of universities and 50 computerized information centers have been equipped and commissioned throughout the country, and more than 1,500,000 volumes of new medical books have been distributed among the students and university staff.

The cultural sector received considerable attention in the First Plan. In addition to measures adopted to facilitate the expansion of cultural activities, funds allocated to current and development expenditures of the said sector were also boosted considerably, especially during the years 1371 and 1372.

Meanwhile, a special budget allocation was made under Clause 55 of the 1372 State Budget to confront cultural onslaught. Among measures adopted toward achieving that end one can mention the following: provision of help to publication of books and the press; revival of cultural and art centers of mosques; support to cultural and art activities of the youth; speeding up the completion of development projects; books exhibitions; and making it possible to use audio-visual equipment at optimum level.

Over the same period the potential number of people who made use of the country's libraries increased from around 6 million in the year 1367 to around 14 million in the year 1372. This registers an average annual growth rate of 18 percent, which is by far higher than the Plan target.

The number of book titles increased from 8,400 for the year 1368 to 9,000 in the year 1372. The circulation of the country's papers also increased from 176 million copies in the year 1367 to 460 million copies in the current year. Free cultural and art training for the children and the youth attained a high rate of growth—from 518,000 pupils in 1368 to 1.5 million in the year 1372.

The number of [university] chairs dedicated to Islamic studies and Persian language and literature increased from nine at the beginning of the Plan to 12 in 1372. According to the Plan target every year 328 historic buildings were to be repaired and restored. However, thanks to the efforts of the officials concerned, in practice, a higher number of historic buildings were restored. From the year 1368 to the year 1372 a total number of 1,410 historic buildings were duly repaired and restored.

Public Education: In the field of state education, in spite of the rapid growth in the population requiring education, there has been considerable success in increasing the provision of education among different groups. During the current year [beginning March 21 1993], 17.3 million pupils in different educational courses were covered by state education. This number was 13.5 in 1368. In 1373 the number of the country's pupils will surpass 18 million. To this end, in the course of the years covering the first five-year plan, 79,000 new classrooms have become available thus increasing capacities to teach 2,370,000 more persons. In addition, in 1373, 25,000 new classrooms with a capacity of 750,000 persons, will be added to the said capacity.

The government has paid special attention to the education of girls, in the past few years. As a result, there has been an extraordinary increase in the number of girls being given an education. In 1365 [1986], the provision of education covering six to 17 year-old girls, was 64 percent. This figure has increased to 81 percent right now.

The extension of the level of educational coverage in deprived and rural regions; improvement in the quality of teaching and change in the intermediate educational system have been among the government's other important achievements in the field of public education.

The expansion of vocational training has also been substantial in a way that the number of individuals covered by non-institutional vocational training increased from 715,000 in 1368 to 2,500,000 in 1372. And in 1373, this number will reach three million. The share of these kinds of trainings in intermediate education, has increased from 12.8 percent in 1368 to 14.2 percent in 1372.

The proportion of literate persons to the total number of people belonging to the above 60 age groups which was 62 percent in 1367, has increased to approximately 76 percent. This is more than the goal foreseen in the plan.

Higher education: In recent years the country's state and private higher education have grown considerably. The number of students with post-graduate qualifications in all state and non-state institutions, have increased from 447,000 in 1368, to 1,33,000 in 1372. The share of the private sector in higher education which was about 28 percent in 1368, has risen to 47 percent in 1372. It is being predicted that in 1373, this share will increase to 48 percent.

The index of the proportion of university students in every 100,000 persons in this sector has improved considerably and has increased from 830 persons in 1368, to 1,510 persons in 1372. In this sector, the expansion of masters and doctorate courses will be (?greater) in the coming years.

Tourism in Iran and in the world: The sector on tourism in Iran and in the world has achieved considerable success in the course of the first plan and as a result, the goals of the plan have been realized on the whole over and above the extent forecast. In this sector, the number of foreign tourists who entered the country increased from 71,000, in 1367 to 320,000 in 1372. The revenues earned from this have reached $160 million in 1372. These revenues were merely $28 million in 1367. It is thought that this figure will reach $195 million in 1373.

The capacity of state and private travelers' residential centers has increased by 3,500 beds, reaching 34,500 beds during the current year. In 1373, 3,000 new beds will be added to the capacity of existing travelers' residential centers.

Voice and vision: With 470 new transmitters becoming operational and the boosting of the existing power of the Voice and Vision, the population reach of the different networks of this sector have increased, to the extent that the population reach of the Vision First and Second Networks have increased from 83 percent and 69 percent, respectively, in 1367 to 90 percent and 83 percent in 1372.

The commissioning of the Vision's third network during the current year [operational on 5 December 1993] covering 13 cities in the country, is another measure which has been carried out in this field.

During the same period, the production of the programs of networks one and two of the Vision increased from 1,400 hours and 990 hours, respectively, in 1368, to 1,800 hours and 1,100 hours in 1372. Also, the broadcasts of the programs of networks one and two of the Vision increased from 2,550 hours and 260 hours, respectively, in 1368, to 3,600 and 3,200 hours in 1372.

Sports and physical education: The development of sports has taken place in two spheres: increasing the number of sports centers, and the training of sportsmen and instructors. In this regard, it should be noted that the number of sports centers owned by the government or the private sector has increased from 5,500 units in 1367 to 7,000 units in 1372. As a result, during the course of the implementation of the first plan, the capacity of these centers has increased to 110,000 admissions per day. It is projected that with a further increase of 250 state-owned and and 150 privately owned sports centers in 1373, the total number of sports centers will reach 7,400 units. This will render the capacity of these centers to more than 1,170,000 admissions per day.

The number of sportsmen affiliated to the sports federations and associations has increased from 750,000 in 1367 to 1,350,000 in 1372. This figure will increase further to 1,440,000 in 1373. During the same period, the government has dealt with the development of women's sports. The number of sportswomen affiliated to sports federations and associations has increased from 236,000 in 1367 to more than 469,000 in 1372. This figure is projected to increase to 556,000 in 1373.

The administrative and executive system: In the first plan a most important strategem was the formation of the Supreme Administrative Council. The legal authority, which was given to the government by the Majles, aimed at reforming the administrative system, easily made possible the emendation of administrative procedures and governmental organizations.

The existence of the Supreme Administrative Council, without the need for going through complex procedures and a great deal of time wasting, brought about the possibility for the government to eliminate unnecessary administrative procedures, reduce the number of parallel organizations, and remove many administrative bottlenecks. Naturally, if the government had lacked sufficient legal authority it would not have been possible to solve many of those problems.

So far, the Council has passed 16 approvals on reforming systems and methods of operation, of which one could name issuing passports and driving licenses, issuing and changing birth certificates in one day, expediting the clearance of goods through customs, issuing national service completion cards, dealing with traffic violations, issuing building permits and certificates of non-violations of building regulations and completion by town councils, issuing inheritance certificates and certificates of payment of death duties, issuing permits for setting up industrial units to applicants, establishing a method of payment of medical treatment expenses by the insured, and setting up administrative and services complexes. As a result of the implementation of the above, numerous facilities have been provided for the public to reduce the duration and the procedural stages of tasks.

About reforming the organization of and reorganizing ministries and decentralizing administrative affairs, the Supreme Administrative Council has taken the following measures:

1. Dissolving, merging and transferring more than 10 public organizations and companies affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture.

2. Reducing the amount of machinery affiliated to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development to two—the National Land and Housing Organization and the National Executive Organization for Governmental and Public Buildings and Installations; and reducing the number of departments and organizations affiliated to that ministry to a maximum of three departments, and reducing posts and manpower by at least 25 percent.

3. Changing the organizational affiliation of the National Heritage Organization from the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

4. Attaching the Workers' Welfare Bank to the Social Security Organization, to provide financial facilities and render suitable services to the insured.

5. Merging the Supreme Council for Coordinating the Country's Technical and Trade Education and the

Supreme Council of Practical Scientific Education, and setting up the Supreme Council of Practical Education.

6. Dissolving the State Animal Husbandry Organization and transferring its duties to the Ministry of Construction Jihad and non-central units of that ministry.

7. Separating the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization from the Hajj, Endowments, and Charity Affairs Organization.

8. Transfering the duties of the Forests and Pastures Organization relating to the maintenance of aquiferous areas, to the Construction Jihad Ministry.

9. Transferring the centers of expansion of manufacturing and development services and the Cooperative Fund from the Interior Ministry and governorates-general to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

10. Strengthening non-central units and expanding the scope of their authority at the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Training and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

To attract public participation in the running of the affairs of the society and handing over matters to the private sector, the Supreme Administrative Council has passed five approvals in matters such as education and training, roads and transport, and matters relating to the Construction Jihad and agriculture.

Judicial matters: In the first plan the general policy regarding judicial issues was to ensure and expand social justice through providing equal opportunities for all members of the society before the law, ensuring social and economic security, facilitating judicial procedures for plaintives and reducing the time taken for investigating court cases.

In the case of the investigation of court cases, during the years of the plan about 12 million files have been investigated in the courts, 13 million of which [as heard] have consisted of files left over from previous years. The number of judges of the Ministry of Justice has increased from 2,200 at the beginning of the plan to 3,818 in 1372.

As regards the reduction in the time taken for the investigation of the files, the average length of time needed for investigating each file which at the beginning of the plan was 100 days has been reduced to 60 days in 1372. Also to facilitate public access to courts and prevent the unnecessary rush to big cities, 35 independent judicial courts were established in small towns and 20 juidicial centers were set up in provincial cities during the course of the plan.

The maintenance of order and security: Until 1369 the responsibilities for maintaining order and security in the country was divided between the police, the gendarmerie and Islamic revolution committees. The conditions after the imposed war and the need to centralize the security matters of the country made it necessary to set up a single, integrated and coordinated security force. Toward this end, the organization of the security forces was reviewed and with the ratification of the law on the Security Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1369 by the Majles this task was accomplished.

During the years of the plan, especially in the years following 1370, we experienced considerable success in the identification and arrest of narcotics, robbery and crime networks, the rounding up and repatriation of illegal foreign nationals, computerization of the information regarding the entry and exit of foreign nationals, and plans for creating a healthy atmosphere in the beaches, and the issues concerned with enjoining good and forbidding evil.

Foreign policy: Over the years covered by the plan necessary grounds for the expansion of foreign relations with various states were prepared through the following actions:

—setting up 18 representative units abroad in the form of embassies and consulates;

—expansion of foreign relations with newly independent Central Asian and Caucasian states through setting up embassies or consulates in those republics;

—expansion of relations with Islamic states, especially Bosnia- Herzegovina.

Housing: The number of new housing units in the urban areas of the state enjoyed an annual rate of increase of 9.1 percent during the years covered by the plan. Thus, the construction of housing units—which in 1368 was 167,000 units—increased to 217,000 units in 1371. The number of newly constructed urban housing units in the current year is estimated to reach 228,000.

Regarding the area under construction from 1368 to 1371, construction in the urban areas of the state has reached up to 90 percent of the plan objectives. For example, in 1371 the extent of under construction areas was 29.4 million square meters when the envisaged figure in the plan for that year was 31.6 million square meters.

For the housing plan in future years, there are plans for state subsidized housing [maskan-e hemayat shodeh] and apartment housing [maskan-e ejtema'i]. It is forecast that this will enable significant development in housing construction.

Regarding apartment housing in 1373 with limited under- construction area, 25,000 housing units will be constructed for use by small families, young couples, and those with small incomes.

Also in the plan for state subsidized housing, by offering protected credit facilities to housing unit constructors, the construction of 75,000 housing units—with less than 75 square meters under construction in large cities and less than 100 square meters in other cities—will be supported.

Urban development: All activities in the urban development sector during the years covered by the plan have enjoyed satisfactory performance, especially concerning urban environment improvement, creating urban protection installations, urban traffic improvement, setting up drinking water installations, and drawing up of comprehensive and pilot plans.

In the field of urban environment improvement the construction and expansion of 2,940 km of sewage installations, 49 sewage treatment installations, implementation of 154 green area expansion projects, and 544 projects in such fields as vegetable and fruit markets, hygienic slaughter houses, mortuaries, cemeteries and the like can be noted.

Also during the years covered by the plan, 606 projects on constructing and expanding urban drinking water networks, 586 projects for constructing urban protection installations, and 736 projects in connection with urban traffic expansion and improvement plans have been carried out.

In 1373 the implementation of required projects for the purpose of creating proper space in cities has continued and it is estimated that the population covered by urban drinking water networks will be increased by 1.2 million.

Also the share of public transport in urban areas has increased by 2 percent and the number of protected cities which are defended against flood damage and loss will be increased.

Electricity: During the first development plan the country's electricity generation capacity has been boosted by a total of 5,500 megawatts [mw], through the completion and operation of 10 steam power stations with the output capacity of 2,297 mw, 19 gas power stations with the capacity of 1,973 mw, Gilan province's compound-cycle gas power stations capable of generating 900 mw, a total of 30 mw electricity generated by hydro-electric power stations, and finally with the reconstruction and operation of a number of power stations with a total output capacity of approximately 2,200 mw.

In the year 1373, construction work on 24 power stations with the total output capacity of 14,000 mw will take place. Out of these projects, a total of 19 units have an output capacity of 2,440 mw. These units consist of the following: two units of the 500 mw power station in Hamadan, one 315 mw unit of Ramin power station, one 320 mw unit of Bisotun station, 12 units of the compound-cycle generators in Martyr Raja'i, Fars, Neyshabur, Shari'ati, and Kazerun with the total output capacity of 1,200 mw, one unit of Iranshahr's steam power plant with the output capacity of 64 mw, the 13-mw power station at Saveh's hydro-electric dam, and finally Zahedan's gas power station with the output capacity of 28 mw.

The country's total electricity output was 43.770 billion kilowatt hours [kwh] in 1367. This has witnessed an annual growth rate of 10.8 percent, and has now reached 73.190 billion kwh in 1372. It is projected that in 1373 this figure will reach 77.320 billion kwh.

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During the years of the plan, the total length of electricity power lines has increased significantly. The total length of power lines for transfer of 230 kilo-volt and 400 kilo-volt electricity has increased from 10,000 and 5,600 circuit-km respectively in 1367, to 15,200 and 6,220 circuit-km respectively in 1372. Among the major projects on transfer of electricity, one can mention power lines in Golpaygan, Qom, Tehran, Tiran, Shahr-e Kord's Martyr Abbaspour power station, Zahedan-Khash 230 kilo-volt power lines, power stations in Kerman, Bandar-e 'Abbas, 'Ali 'Abad, Gonbad, Bandar-e Pol, Shiraz, Qeshm island, Marvdasht, Surmaq, Jahrom, Lar, Qom, and the Be'that power station in Arak. In 1373, with the operation of 556 circuit-kilometers of 230 kilo-volt lines, and 770 circuit-kilometers of 400 kilo-volt, the total length of these lines is projected to reach 15,764 and 6,993 circuit-km, respectively.

The number of villages in the country connected to the electricity grid has increased from 22,540 in 1367 to 28,360 in 1372. This means that during the years of the plan, a total of 5,820 villages have been supplied with electricity. During 1373, another 170 villages will receive electricity, this implies that 74 percent of villages with a population of more than 50 households, will have electricity.

Oil: Crude oil production capacity has increased from 2.8 million barrels per day [bpd] in the year 1367 to 4.2 million bpd in the year 1372, which shows an annual increase of 9.3 percent. In order to protect the country's crude oil reserves, the volume of gas injected into the oilfields has increased from 25 million cubic meters per day in the year 1367 to 54 million cubic meters per day in the year 1372 during the same time. Also in order to increase production capacity and protect oilfields, four projects to produce crude oil from new fields, five desalination units, three important gas injection projects in the Gachsaran, Marun and Karanj oilfields have been completed and inaugurated, and the Naftshahr oil fields have been reconstructed, the Hendijan, Bahregansar, Reshadat, Salman and Resalat oilfields on the Persian Gulf have been renovated and reconstructed. They were the most important of the projects which were completed during the implementation of the plan.

On digging operations during the implementation of the plan, the number of existing oil rigs have increased by 20; and the level of digging has increased annually from 101 km at the beginning of the plan to over 404 km towards the end of the plan. Also 18,000 square km of seismological, gravitational, and magnetic surveys have been made in various areas of the country.

In connection with oil and gas exploration, we can mention the discovery of six oilfields with reserves of more than 3 billion barrels of crude oil, discovery and gaining access to four gas fields with reserves of more than 3,000 billion cubic meters of gas and around 3 billion barrels of gas liquids. They include the southern Pars gas fields.

During the year 1373, also in order to increase crude oil and natural gas reserves, 10 digging rigs were used and a total of 55,000 meters of exploratory digging were made in land and at sea and the average volume of gas injection into the oilfields will increase up to 58 million cubic meters per day.

In connection with crude oil exports, it is worth mentioning that during the period of the plan the average crude oil exports increased from 1.916 million bpd in the year 1367 to 2.545 million bpd in the year 1372, which shows an annual growth of 5.8 percent.

With the completion of projects such as that of the Arak refinery reaching the capacity of 150,000 bpd, reconstruction of the first and second phases of the Abadan refinery with a capacity of 250,000 bpd, reconstruction of the Mahshahr refinery and the laying of the Tangeh Fanni, Arak, Bandar Abbas, Rafsanjan and Arak-Malayer crude oil pipelines during the five-year period of the plan the average supply of oil products has increased from 134,000 cubic meters in the year 1367 to 181,000 cubic meters per day in the year 1372, which shows an annual increase of 6.2 percent. Therefore during the period between 1368-72, the consumption of various kinds of oil products have shown an outstanding growth. For example during the same period, consumption of petrol has increased by 8.5 percent, paraffin by 8.8 percent, diesel oil by 4.3 percent and fuel oil by 3.7 percent.

The increasing trend of the supply of oil products will continue during the year 1373 and during the coming year the supply of four main oil products will increase to 195,000 cubic meters per day, which will show a growth of 7.4 percent in comparison to the same figures for the year 1372.

Gas: The volume of natural gas consumption during the period of the plan increased 20 percent annually and increased from 12 billion cubic meters in 1367 [1988] to 29.5 billion cubic meters in 1372 [1993] and will reach 32.6 billion cubic meters in 1373 [1994]. In the same context, the maximum daily consumption of natural gas, which was 48 million cubic meters in 1367 [1988], reached 110 cubic meters in 1372 [1993], showing an increase higher than that projected in the plan. The growth process of the maximum daily consumption of natural gas in 1373 [1994] will increase and reach 122 million cubic meters next year. One of the most important aims of the this part of the first plan is to increase the portion of natural gas consumption, in comparison to hydrocarbonic products. Fortunately, this portion increased from 21.5 per cent in 1367 [1988] to 33 percent in 1372 [1993] after the implementation of the necessary projects in three areas: expansion of the capacity of gas refineries, expansion of gas pipelines, and expansion of the gas network. It is expected that this portion will increase to 34.2 percent in 1372 [1993]. In the context of expanding the gas refineries' capacity, after the first phase of Kangan refinery started operations with a daily capacity of 45 million cubic meters, the daily refining capacity of natural gas reached 110 million cubic meters in 1372 [1993]. This capacity will reach 140 million cubic meters in 1373 [1994] after two other units of the Vali-asr refinery, may God hasten his noble advent, and the Sar-Khun-2 refinery start operating. In the context of increasing the gas pipelines, the length of the lines increased 3,250 km during the plan, from 5,000 km in 1367 [1988] to 8,250 km in 1372 [1993], after another section of the second national pipeline, the northern pipeline, the western transfer pipeline, and the northwestern transfer pipeline began operating. In the context of expanding the gas pipeline networks and increasing gas connections, effective steps have been taken in 186 towns. As a result, the length of the gas pipeline networks which stood at 15,800 km in 1367 [1988] doubled to 33,800 km in 1372 [1993], and the aim of the plan in this area was completely realized. In 1373 [1994] another 2,700 km will be added to the country's gas pipeline networks. Also, 1.15 million gas connections for homes and work places have been made during the plan. Thus the total gas connections increased from 750,000 at the beginning of the plan to approximately 1.9 million at the end of 1372 [1993]. In 1373 [1994] the home and trade gas connections will increase by 150,000 and industrial gas connections by 230. As a result of programs for the expansion of the gas pipeline networks during the plan, the number of families using natural gas increased from 887,000 in 1367 [1988] to 3.6 million, and thus some 53 percent of the urban population has natural gas connections. In 1373 [1994] 345,000 more families will have natural gas. Also, it is noteworthy that with the expansion of gas pipeline networks, the consumption of liquid gas annually increased by 8 percent, from 1.3 million metric tons in 1367 [1988] to 1.9 million metric tons in 1372 [1993]; and it is expected to reach 2 million metric tons.

Transportation: In the field of road construction and repair, in the course of the plan 3,200 kms of main and minor roads have been constructed within the context of national plans, and about 3,700 kms of minor regional roads have been constructed and connected to the national roads network. In this way, the construction and repair of the roads has been about 50 percent more than the targets set in the plan. Also during the same period 4,000 kms of rural roads have been constructed and about 3,000 kms of main and minor roads have undergone major repairs.

It is planned that in 1373 [1994] 550 kms will be added to the expressways, highways, and main roads, about 1,440 kms to the minor roads, and about 750 kms to rural roads. In the year 1373, about 3,400 kms of roads will be repaired and paved.

During the years of the plan with an increase of more than 25,000 trucks to the road transportation fleet and by adopting the policy of getting rid of licenses for the transportation of goods, the volume of goods transported over distances in excess of 150 kms was increased from about 120 million metric tons in the year 1367 [1988] to about 150 million metric tons in the year 1372 [1993]. It is expected that in the year 1373 this figure would exceed 160 million metric tons.

Also by adding 7,000 buses and 12,000 mini-buses to the passenger fleet and increasing the number of franchises for transportation of passengers, the number of passenger traffic has increased from 500 million in the year 1367 to 570 million in the year 1372. It is expected that this number would increase to about 600 million in the year 1373.

In the field of railway transportation, the modernization of 427 kms and improvements [behsazi] in 645 kms of the existing railway lines have already been carried out. Also work on the construction of 1,900 kms of railways in the first plan including Bafq-Bandar-e 'Abbas railway line has continued, out of which 510 kms has been completed and commissioned. As the result of these measures and increasing the efficiency of railway transportation, the transportation of goods and passengers has increased from 13 million tons and 6.8 million passengers in the year 1367 to 20 million metric tons and 9 million passengers respectively in the year 1372.

In 1373 the modernization of 150 kms and improvements in 210 kms of the existing railway lines will be completed and the amount of transportation of goods will be increased to 22 million metric tons.

During this period, work on the construction and modernization of Imam Khomeyni, Arak, Ardebil, Ilam, Zanjan, Shahr-e Kord, and Yasuj airports has continued, and Ardebil and Tabas airports have already come into operation. As a result, the number of functioning airports of the country in the year 1372 has reached 30. The capacity for passenger traffic in the country's airports has also increased in the past few years, reaching nearly 14 million passengers in the year 1372. With the purchase of 11 Fokker and small propeller aircraft, the leasing of 6 Topolov aircraft, and increasing the efficiency of domestic flights, the number of passengers flown on domestic and foreign flights has increased respectively from 5.1 million passengers and 570,000 passengers in 1367 to 7.3 million and 1.2 million passengers in the year 1372.

In the year 1367 the capacity of commercial ports of the country was 16 million metric tons. This has been increased to 28 million metric tons in the year 1372. It is expected that in 1373 their capacity will exceed 30 million metric tons. In addition, the reconstruction work in Khorramshahr port is being continued, and a part of that port with a capacity of 400,000 metric tons has already come into operation. Meanwhile, since last year Abadan port has been re-opened and is being made ready for operation.

In the field of fishing and multi-purpose ports, work on Pezam, Beris, and Remin fishing ports has been completed. By making use of these ports the capacity of the fishing ports in the southern ports of the country will reach 150,000 metric tons at the end of 1372 [21 March 1993].

Post: During the period of the first plan 463 urban post offices, 1,474 rural post offices, and 80 mobile post offices were created, which increased urban post offices to 1,186, rural post offices to 4,630 units, and mobile post offices to 80 units during the year 1372. Also during 1373, 60 urban and 93 rural post offices will be added to those mentioned above.

The number of postal packages increased from 200 million in 1367 to 500 million in 1372. Therefore, during the plan the total of 1,700 million packages were delivered resulting in an increase in the delivery of packages from 3.8 in 1367 to 8.3 packages in 1372. [sentence and figures as received] It is envisaged that during 1373 the number of packages will reach 700 million and the annual number of postal packages will increase to 11.6 (?percent).

Also the quality of postal services have improved during the plan and the average time between the time of receiving a package and its delivery between provincial centers, which was around 50 hours in 1367, was reduced to 37 hours in 1371.

The population and area coverage of each postal unit during the plan improved significantly, reducing from 13,402 persons and 424 square km respectively at the beginning of the plan to 10,351 persons and 283 square kms in 1372.

During the implementation of the plan over 50 different kinds of new postal services—including express, financial, fax, and telephone posts—were created and vehicle services were made operational.

The express post was active in 1,300 urban and rural post offices and delivered nationwide over 3,000 billion rials of financial sums belonging to individuals during the four years of the plan. At present, salaries and pensions of around 300,000 pensioners of the social security organization are paid monthly at their local post offices. A switching center has been inaugurated and over 23,000 subscribers enjoy the benefits of fax facilities and 1,500 post offices have been equipped with fax machines providing special facilities for the delivery of documents.

Communications: During the plan a total of 2.791 million telephone lines were installed after the construction of 727 urban telephone centers and an increase in the capacity of the existing telephone centers. From the above total, some 1.718 telephone lines were transferred and are now operating. The total number of telephones, either installed or operating, increased from 2.09 million and 1.88 million respectively in 1367 to 4.881 million and 3.598 million in 1372. In 1373, 722,000 new telephones will be transferred to applicants. At the beginning of the plan, the number of urban and inter-city public telephones were 11,770. At the end of the plan, they had increased to 23,220 following the connection and operation of 11,450 during the plan. With the implementation of the policy for the expansion of public services, some 8,300 urban and inter-city public telephones will be installed and used in 1373. The inter-city communication network expanded during the first plan and 360 areas in the cities were provided with inter-city codes and connected to the general communication network. With the increase in the inter-city telephone centers, and following the building of inter-city digital switches and after the expansion of 42,178 inter- city channels, the total number of inter-city channels increased from 20,596 channels in 1367 to 62,744 channels at the end of the plan. Therefore, there has been an increase in the speed and ease of inter-city communication for the users of inter-city communication services. There has been an increase in reliable inter-city communications, since the second communication complex became operational in Tehran's Yussefabad region—with a capacity similar to that of Imam Khomeyni communication center at the Imam Khomeyni square—and after the second inter-city communication centers became operational in the provinces of Esfehan, Shiraz, Tabriz, Mashhad, Hamedan and the cities of Babol and Ahvaz. Following the construction of microwave and installation of low-capacity and high-capacity systems in the existing transfer network, the digital microwave lines have increased by 3,700 km. Thus the country's communication transfer network has increased from 43,427 channels in 1367 to 135,370 channels in 1372. With the installation and use of the 5,000-digital number switching at Tehran's Imam Khomeyni center, the international communication channels, increased from 850 channels in 1367 to 2,559 channels at the end of the plan. Thus the necessary services for contacting other countries is now available. The expansion of rural communications is among the fundamental actions taken during the first plan. In this context, communications between the country's villages have increased through 3,420 rural communication centers. Thus the rural areas enjoying telephone connections increased from 3,220 in 1367 to 6,640 in 1372. During the plan, a 10,000-channel computerized Telex center was installed in Tehran which started operations. During the current year, preliminary steps have been taken to establish new communication services and it is expected that a 10,000-number mobile telephone network will start in Tehran in the early periods of 1373. A 200-number switch data transfer network has been installed in the current year and another 4,000 switches will be installed and put into operation next year.

Water: During the plan, construction of the Toroq and Kardeh reservoir dams was completed in Khorasan and Jiroft in Kerman, Pishin in Baluchestan, Choghakhor in Chahar-Mahall va Bakhtiari and Saveh in the Central Province, and also a number of diversion dams were built. Annual water consumption from surface and underground water resources of the country increased to a total of 9.8 billion cubic meters through better use of current projects and also through implementation of small projects, providing water and using underground water resources.

During the rest of the current year and during 1373 the construction of reservoir dams of 15th of Khordad in Qom, Barun in west Azerbaijan and other projects will be completed providing around 790 million cubic meters of water from surface and underground water resources for various kind of consumption.

During the first plan, major and minor irrigation and drainage projects were implemented within the framework of national and small projects to provide water. A total of 354,000 hectares [ha] of land have been covered by major projects and 245,000 ha of land have been covered by minor projects.

During 1373, the building of irrigation and drainage water networks of Juneqan in Chahar-Mahall va Bakhtiari, Alaqol and Gomishan in Mazandaran and Qurichai in Ardebil will be completed.

In providing water to cities and industries, 1.2 billion cubic meters were added to the annual capacity of water installations during the plan.

Agriculture: Significant achievements have been made in the field of husbandry and agricultural products due to the adoption of a policy for guaranteeing prices; allocation of a substantial amount of subsidy to agricultural institutions, educational activities, and training; research achievements; soil and water infrastructure operations; and insurance of agricultural products.

For example, wheat production, which was 7 million metric tons in 1367, with a nine percent annual increase reached 10.8 million metric tons in 1372; rough rice production, which was 1.7 million metric tons, with an 8.4 percent annual increase reached 2.6 million metic tons; sugar beet production, which was 4.45 million metric tons, with a 5.6 percent annual increase reached 5.84 million metric tons; cereal production, which was 340,000 metric tons, with a 15.5 percent annual increase reached 700,000 metric tons; oil seed production, which was 140,000 metric tons, with a 5.8 percent annual increase reached 186,000 metric tons; red meat production, which was 525,000 metric tons, with a 4.1 percent annual increase reached 643,000 metric tons; chicken meat production, which was 300,000 metric tons, with a 13.3 percent increase reached 560,000 metric tons; egg production, which was 250,000 metric tons, with a 12.5 percent annual increase reached 450,000 metric tons; and milk production, which was 3.4 million metric tons, with a 4.9 percent annual increase reached 4.31 million metric tons.

It is expected that in 1373 the process of increase in the husbandry and agricultural products will increase so that the following products will increase: wheat to 11.64 million metric tons, rough rice to 2.68 million metric tons, sugar beet to 5.86 million metric tons, red meat to 660,000 metric tons, chicken meat to 600,000 metric tons, eggs to 475,000 metric tons, and milk to 4.54 million metric tons.

In the case of wheat reserves, now that the 100,000-tonne silos are operational in Kerman, Hamedan, and Shiraz, and 50,000-tonne silos in Gonbad, a total of 350,000 metric tons have been added to the reserve wheat capacity.

In the case of soil and water programs for 1373, the following have been envisioned: Operations for renewing and reconstructing 70,000 hectares of irrigated regions, including integration or division of land, leveling, digging waterways, and construction of inter-farm roads in basin areas of modern and traditional irrigation networks.

During the first plan, 186,000 hectares of traditional farms and 100,000 hectare of modern farms have been reconstructed.

Operations for covering traditional waterways have also been carried out to facilitate water transfer in 470,000 hectares. The covering of traditional waterways in 58,000 hectares will be carried out in 1373.

Among the aims of the first plan are the recovering of natural resources and in this context operations have been carried out for sand stabilization in 2.64 million hectares.

Trees have been planted in 337,000 hectares and this will continue in an area of 71,00 hectares in 1373.

Operations have been carried out to protect water resources in 2.876 million hectares and to protect forests and pastures in 94.7 million hectares. These operations will continue in 1373 with water resources protection in 690,000 hectares and forest and pasture protection in 102 million hectares.

Fishing and fisheries: Fishing and production of various kind of marine life in domestic waters—the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Gulf of Oman—has grown considerably during the plan, so much so that the total fishing in the above-mentioned waters has shown an annual increase of 9.3 percent, reaching from 237,000 metric tons in 1367 to 370,000 metric tons in 1372. It is envisaged that during 1373 that level will be increased to 382,000 metric tons.

In agricultural research around 1,500 research projects were implemented in various areas of agricultural sector each year and around 66,000 metric tons of various kind of stock seeds and around 2.2 million of improved saplings were produced and distributed.

During 1368-1371 some 460 rural improvement projects were implemented in rural areas which will continue in future years as one of the important measures taken by the government.

Industry: In the years prior to the first plan, the country's total industries suffered extensively due to, on the one hand, the damaging effects of the imposed war and the economic sanctions, and on the other, extensive bureaucracy, hindering regulations, fast growing prices of goods and services, and the implementation of rationing of goods for organizations. As a result, the sector's added value in 1364-67 [1985-88] faced a noticeable reduction.

Thus now the top priority of the industrial program is to strengthen the lost industrial ability, reconstruct industrial capitals, recreate a pricing system, and establish competitive economic conditions.

During the plan, arrangements were made to regulate trade laws, encourage exports, remove bureaucratic obstacles in the way of production, rebuild war-damaged units, impose balanced prices, improve quality through standardization, expand engineering and planning units, and use domestic sources of productivity. We have, therefore, witnessed an increase in this sector's investment and added value. As a result of these efforts, production of almost all industrial products has increased in the past several years.

With regard to fundamental and essential commodities, the following have been produced in the 1368-71 [1989-92] period: a total of approximately 2.9 million metric tons of sugar, 2.2 million metric tons of refined vegetable oil, 800,000 metric tons of glass, and 3.3 metric tons of tires.

Thus in the first four years of the first plan, sugar production increased at an annual rate of 6.5 percent, vegetable oil at 14.2 percent, glass at 10.8 percent, and tires at 17.4 percent.

In the other parts of industry in the same period, the achieved increases are noticeable. For instance, during 1368-71 [1989-92] we have witnessed the growth of cement production with an annual rate of six percent, steel 25.2 percent, copper 16.6 percent, aluminum 26.3 percent, fireproof goods 14.6 percent, various heavy vehicles 30 percent, various light vehicles 28 percent, road construction machinery 49 percent, and agricultural machinery 11.4 percent.

The vehicle manufacturing industry: In the vehicle industry, in the first plan period, two new types of buses and coaches, a type of truck, a type of minibus, and two new types of passenger cars were manufactured in the country. For the first time in the vehicle manufacturing industry, the production of passenger cars has been accomplished through the manufacture of more than 50 percent of its parts by domestic manufacturers.

In the country's heavy industries, eight large-scale projects have been executed in the process of the implementation of new policies. They include the setting up of design-engineering units to gather data and technology; better utilization of the country's hardware potentials and utilized capacities; making the biggest saving in projects' investments and cooperating with reputable companies by way of joint ventures.

Of those projects that are still in progress, one could name the project on the manufacture of heavy electric machinery; the project on the manufacture of heavy diesel engines; the project on the manufacture of oil and gas and petrochemical equipment; the project on the manufacture of water pumps and turbines.

In the first plan period, considerable work was done for the purpose of restarting and implementing new projects in the petrochemical industry. In that industry, with the implementation of projects on the methanol unit of Shiraz petrochemical complex, the diamonium unit of Razi petrochemical complex, the liquefied gas separation unit of Bandar-e Emam petrochemical complex, Esfahan petrochemical plant, and the first phase of Arak petrochemical plant, petrochemical output, which amounted to 884,000 metric tons in 1367, rose to about 6,000,000 metric tons at the end of the first plan.

In the first plan period, industrial exports also enjoyed outstanding growth. The value of the country's total industrial exports rose from $155 million in 1368 to about $1 trillion in 1371. That level was achieved mainly through the export of consumer goods, basic metals, and petrochemical industries.

In the four years of the first plan, thousands of manufacturing projects were commissioned. Several projects will also become operational by the end of this year. Of these projects, one could name Mobarakeh steel complex; Kaviyan heavy extrusion plant; the Esfahan steel mill expansion project; Ahvaz steel complex; Zanjan lead smelting unit; Muteh gold melting unit; DMT plant, which manufactures synthetic fibers; Yazd-e and Kerman rubber manufacturing plant; Serum manufacturing plants in Mashhad and Tabriz; Lorestan pharmaceutical unit and Zahravi pharmaceutical unit in Tabriz; Qa'en and Abadeh cement plants; LIB unit, which produces raw materials for detergents; Qazvin metallurgical powder unit; Nekah ship building and platform building unit; Qadir textile machinery manufacturing industries; Kachiran sewing machine manufacturing plant; Qazvin motorcycle manufacturing plant; and 130 projects on agricultural processing industries.

Also, reconstruction work has been carried out on manufacturing units that suffered considerable damaged in the course of the imposed war, among which one could name the construction of the units at Dorud cement plant; Pars paper manufacturing plant; Dezful sugar plant and Gharb textile factory.

In 1373 too, other important projects will be commissioned in the industrial sector. Of those projects one could name the following:

Khash cement plant, with a daily production capacity of 2,300 metric tons.

The second phase of Arak petrochemical plant, with an annual output of 200,000 metric tons of raw materials for chemical industries.

The second phase of Bandar-e Emam Khomeyni petrochemical plant, with a production capacity of 2,000,000 metric tons of liquefied gas, raw materials for rubber, plastic and chemicals.

The second phase of Yazd rubber manufacturing plant, with an annual capacity of 16,000 metric tons of assorted tires and tubes.

The expansion of the software network and increasing the utilization of the existing facilities.

Between 1368 and 1371 nearly 300 design-engineering units and 245 assembly design units were erected in the country's heavy industries. The expansion of these units could be very effective in increasing technical know-how in the industrial sector. For that reason, the expansion of such activities in the industrial sector in the future will be emphasized by the government.

Mines: During the life-span of the plan, the mining sector has witnessed considerable growth. For instance, with an average annual growth rate of 33 percent, the production of iron ore has increased from 1.8 million metric tons in 1367, to 5.7 million metric tons in 1371. During the same period, the production of copper, with an average annual growth rate of 15.2 percent, has increased from 5.1 million metric tons to 9 million metric tons; and finally with an average annual growth rate of 6.4 percent, the production of coal has increased from 758,000 metric tons to 973,000 metric tons.

In the area of mining exploration, the first plan had projected that the entire territory of the country should be brought under the coverage of maps with a scale of 1:250,000. In 1371, the major part of work on these maps was concluded.

Moreover, during the years of the first plan, numerous projects were implemented in the area of providing the necessary equipment for mines so as to render them operational. Some of these projects have now been completed, while others are still in progress. Among these projects, one can mention the following cases: Providing equipment for the iron ore mines in Gol-e Gohar, Chuqar, Chador-Malu, Chenareh, and Howz-Mahi. Similar work has also been carried out at the gold mine in Muteh.

It must be noted that between the years 1368 and 1371, a total amount of $260 trillion in foreign exchange has been earned from the export of various minerals.

The Major Objectives of the Second Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan: In the Second plan attention has been paid to the achievement of four main goals. The achievement of steady economic, social, and cultural development and growth in the country is one of the goals of the plan, which will be achieved through making use of domestic capabilities and reducing dependence on oil income.

In order to achieve a stable level of growth it is necessary to encourage constructive competition, to enhance people's role in economic, social, and cultural activities, to increase the efficiency of executive organizations, to restructure the government, and to move toward creating a balance in the fields of savings and investment, achieving a balance between imports and exports, and achieving a balance between the government's income and expenditure.

To achieve social justice is another fundamental goal that has been given priority in the plan. This goal can be achieved through a general raising of the quality of people's lives, strengthening the system of social welfare, expanding government's supporting role, expanding judicial security, ensuring economic security, eliminating the opportunities for windfall profits, reforming the fiscal system, and paying attention to matters that would remove deprivation.

Another important goal is to provide for lasting growth in the cultural affairs of the country, which can be achieved through making use of the strong points of our culture and of Islamic values, such as a spirit of hard work and endeavor, devotion and self-sacrifice, shunning wasteful and luxurious living, and the greater implementation of Islamic teaching.

By God's grace and through the support of the self-sacrificing Iranian nation, as well as the government's efforts, the necessary means will be provided for the achievement of the above goals of the second plan. Naturally, the achievement of the goals of any plan would require extensive efforts by the government and members of society. As the experience of the first plan and the experiences of other development plans in other countries demonstrate, no development can be achieved without enduring the hardships and difficulties of the period when one is aiming at growth. In this context, one can point to the unpleasant periods that the European nations experienced in the course of their industrial revolution and economic growth, or one can look at the difficulties that were experienced by the people of the Far East in the course of their economic growth and development.

Saying this does not mean that one should ignore the economic, social, and cultural consequences of the implementation of development plans or that the government should unconditionally give in to these difficulties. On the contrary, the aim is to explain some of the realities that we will definitely face in the course of this process. As the government has acted in past years, it will concentrate its efforts on minimizing the consequences of this process, especially as regards the low income strata of society. To this end, the government has included considerable contributions in its general budget toward helping the low income classes of society.

In addition, with the aim of helping the development of deprived regions in the course of the years of the second plan, altogether more than 3 trillion rials of development funds will be allocated to this task, which will be spent on the following projects in those areas: Continuation of development plans in the fields of construction of rural roads, providing electricity and healthy drinking water to villages, providing educational, cultural, artistic, and sports facilities, the building of telecommunication facilities and providing gas to villages with large populations, implementing regional development plans in order to develop the potential and capability of these regions, providing banking resources to these regions in projects dealing with irrigation, agriculture, industry, housing, and social affairs by diverting some of the income from the banking system through the general budget.

Population: During the years prior to the start of the first plan the country's population was growing rapidly, such that natural population growth reached an unprecedented level and was considered one of the highest growth rates in the world. That was why the first plan paid special attention to population growth control.

Even though the actions taken in the first plan resulted in an outstanding reduction in population growth, the future outlook needs following up and the adoption of measures to regulate growth is inevitable.

During the second plan, the average increase in the country's population would be 2.3 and will increase from

60 million in 1372 to 67.3 million in 1377. Therefore, during the plan the country's population will increase by 7.3 million.

Between 1372-77, those born during the rapid growth in population will gradually reach productive age. On the one hand, the number of women reaching child-bearing age will increase, while on the other a younger combination will appear in that strata of the population.

The number of women of child-bearing age, currently estimated at 13.6 million, will increase to 16.1 million by the end of the second plan. The rapid growth in population among that strata of society, together with a younger age combination, will clearly show the need for control of the population and the implementation of family planning programs. On the other hand, in future years all those born during a rapid growth in population will become socially active and quickly add to the number of persons requiring social services. For example, the number in need of education, currently standing at 19.2 million, will increase to 21 million by the end of the second plan. Requests will also increase in the same way for health, medical, social, and cultural services by that strata of the people.

During the second plan, the active population of the country will increase from 32.3 million in 1372 to 38.6 million in 1377. In addition, the population between the ages of 10 and over will increase from 42 million in 1372 to 50 million in 1377.

It can be seen that during the second plan the country's manpower will grow considerably. It is envisaged that over 2.5 million of these will be looking for work. The government and the country face a grave responsibility to meet the growing needs of that population with food, clothing, housing, health and treatment, education, jobs, the requirements to form a family, welfare requirements, and other social and infrastructural services. As mentioned before, in such a condition where the country's income has a limited growth, it is essential to think of arrangements and make basic reorganization of the services at the disposal of that huge population—still growing and gradually reaching the age of activity—which has been particularly focused on in the second plan.

In the second plan, special priority has been given to social affairs, such as general, secondary and higher education, health and hygiene, and physical education. The allocation of considerable resources of the plan to these areas underlines the said priority. In particular, special attention has been reserved for provision of facilities for sports and physical education. One of the other priorities of the second plan is to continue infrastructural plans and projects. In view of the necessity to attract people's participation in cultural, social, and production spheres, the government has allocated sums to these spheres from the sources available to the plan's budget. These sums will be paid directly to the private sector, and will subsidize expenditure on banking facilities.

In the second plan, the issue of giving greater momentum to the construction of residential units will be addressed. By providing direct assistance, the government will encourage the construction of residential units within the boundaries of consumption patterns, and will provide the necessary means for mass construction of housing units.

Rejuvenation of the industrial sector and the expansion of its software facilities will also be dealt with. Through provision of different varieties of support and protection for the process of transfer of technology—including support and protection in the areas of custom and excise, credits, research, development and organization—the government will strive to make development and progress in this area possible.

The agricultural sector is one of the most important economic sectors in the country. As before, this sector will be protected by setting guaranteed prices, providing state aid toward development and the procurement of raw and primary material.

In view of the existing uncertainty surrounding the level of income generated by petroleum exports, the second plan has been compiled in two scenarios, in which provisions have been made for both low and high levels of financial resources, as well as for the plan's quantitative aims. During the course of the second plan, the rate of growth in gross domestic product has been projected at between 5.4 and 6 percent per year. Moreover, the rate of growth in investment has been projected to be between 9 and 11 percent per year. The detailed figures, which have been projected on the basis of each of the above-said scenarios, can be found in the text of the second plan's bill and its appendices, all of which are being presented to the Majles.

Naturally, the implementation of a number of projects will depend on securing an income higher than the sums that have been projected in the pessimistic [badbinaneh] scenario. The list of these projects, the implementation of which will have to be delayed in the case of financial austerity, has been compiled separately.

It is necessary to note that the second plan has dealt with the implementation of a number of particular plans and projects through mechanisms of foreign investment. Such projects will be implemented only if their financial resources can be secured by finance [preceding word in English] or barter. The list of such projects has been incorporated in the plan bill's appendices.

At this juncture, the highlights of the quantitative aims of the second plan will be presented to the esteemed majles deputies.

Welfare and Social Security: The top priority in this sector is the continued provision of services to 532,000 members of the esteemed families of the martyrs. As well as expanding the available services, efforts will be made to help all the wives and children of the martyrs, in cases of need, to be owners of their own houses.

The coverage of vulnerable strata will also be extended. As a result, the number of persons covered by the permanent services of social security will increase from 3.1 million at the beginning of 1373 to 4.1 million at the end of the second plan. As well as receiving a regular monthly stipend, the beneficiaries will also avail themselves of the possibilities of medical insurance.

As a result of the decision to expand social insurance—which is one of the basic policies of the government—20 million rural people will receive medical insurance by the end of the life-span of the second development plan [on 20 March 1999]. Therefore, the total number of medical insurance beneficiaries will increase from 22.089 million at the end of 1372 to 29.212 million at the end of the year 1377.

As for social insurance, it must be said that the number of employees and workers who receive a monthly stipend will increase from 1.138 million to 1.392 million. In addition, around 1.4 million people employed in rural areas will be covered by disability and death policies.

Health and Treatment: During the period of the second plan a total of 6,075 rural clinics, urban health and treatment clinics, birth centers, and urban and provincial health centers, will be set up. Thus, the number of such facilities will rise from 16,661 units at present to 23,386 units in 1377.

Over the same period, 5,800 more villages will have clean, running water, thus the number will rise from 29,500 villages at the beginning of the plan to 35,300 villages at the end of the plan. The number of rural people using this water will rise from 84 percent to 90 percent.

Under the second plan, a total of 18,000 hospital beds will be added to the existing number. Thus, the number of hospital beds will rise from 93,000 at the beginning of the plan to 111,000 at the end of the plan in 1377.

The ratio of hospital beds per 1,000 heads of population will rise from 1.54 at the beginning of the plan to 1.65 at the end of the plan.

The number of doctors per 100,000 heads of population will increase from 50 at the beginning of the plan to 74 at the end of the plan period.

Meanwhile, the coverage of family planning will rise from 50 percent at the beginning of the plan to around 70 percent at the end of the plan. Over the same period the percentage of children being vaccinated against six preventable diseases will rise from 90 percent to 95 percent.

Culture and Art: During the second plan, policies have been drafted and measures foreseen to confront the cultural onslaught and to address the issue of how the people, especially youths, spend their leisure time. These policies, and measures accompanying them, will lead to an increase in the quantity and an improvement in the quality of cultural programs and activities.

Over that period the number of public libraries, youth and children's cultural centers, libraries and cultural complexes will, altogether, rise from 988 in the year 1372 to 1,600 units in 1377. In addition, 1,000 cultural centers will be set up at mosques in an effort to make popular cultural programs more active.

In addition, the titles and circulation of books will rise from 9,000 titles and 63.8 million copies in 1372 to 11,000 titles and 95 million copies in 1377. Over the same period press circulation will rise from 460 million in 1372 to 600 million in 1377.

Public education and training: In the second plan period the total number of school pupils will rise from 17.3 million in 1372 to 19.5 million in 1377. In the second plan the technical and trade educational capacity will increase from 2.5 million per month to 5.2 million per month.

In the course of the plan, 108,000 classrooms will be completed, set up, and commissioned. For the purpose of the expansion of technical and trade education, 6,800 workshops will be completed, set up and equipped.

Literacy in the over six-years-old population will rise from 76 percent at the start of the period to 84 percent by the end of the plan.

Higher education: In the second plan the total number of university students all over the country will increase from 1.033 million in 1372 to 1.239 million at the end of the plan, of which 539,000 will be studying at government institutes by the end of the plan.

It should be pointed out that the proportion of masters and doctorate students among the total number of students will increase from 9.4 percent in 1372 to 10.8 percent in 1377.

Tourism in Iran and the world: Adopted policies and also measures forecast concerning tourism in Iran and the world in the second five-year plan, especially private sector participation in the expansion of the tourist industry, will cause fundamental changes and positive developments in that sector. Hotel capacity will increase from 34,500 beds in 1372 to 59,500 beds in 1377. In addition, the number of foreign tourists is expected to rise from 320,000 in 1372 to 700,000 in 1377, and revenues obtained from that quarter are expected to increase from $160 million in 1372 to $350 million in 1377.

Voice and Vision: In the second five-year plan, measures have been taken to improve the quality and quantity of radio and tv programs. To that end, the production of first and second network programs [IRTV1, IRTV2] will be increased from 1,800 hours and 1,100 hours in 1372 to 1,900 hours and 1,700 hours in 1377 respectively.

With the increase in IRTV1 and IRTV2 broadcasting from 3,600 hours and 3,200 hours in 1372 to 3,800 hours and 4,500 hours in 1377 respectively, in 1377, these networks, which were beamed to 90 percent and 83 percent of the population in 1372 respectively, will be beamed to 93.7 percent and 90.8 percent of the population at the end of the plan.

In addition to these networks, the third vision network [IRTV3], which commenced broadcasting in 1372, will be able to increase the production and broadcast of its programs from 540 and 1,100 hours respectively in 1372 to about 2,200 and 3,600 hours at the end of the plan. The population's coverage of that network will be increased from 26 percent in 1372 to about 53 percent in 1377.

Physical education and sports: In the second plan, special attention has been paid to physical education and sports. To this end, steps will be taken for the private sector tp participate in sports activities, which will result in the propagation of sports among various classes, including youngsters, students, women, and laborers.

During the plan the number of sportsmen affiliated to sports federations and committees will increase from 1.35 million in 1372 to 1.8 in 1377, while the number of sportswomen will increase from 469,000 in 1372 to more than double that figure in 1377.

In the second plan the number of private and public sports centers will increase from 7,000 in 1372 to 9,400 in 1377. The number of members of schools' sports associations will also increase from 300,000 in 1372 to 640,000 at the end of the plan.

The Administrative and Executive System: In the second plan the Supreme Administrative Council has been instructed to direct its efforts toward improving the formation and composition of human resources, improving the efficiency and managerial capabilities of executive organizations, improving administrative laws and regulations and the constitutions of executive organizations, amalgamating or closing satellite organizations affiliated to various ministries, delegating government duties to the private sector, reviewing the activities of government companies and satellite companies affiliated to the government, and reforming about 120 practices which are in common use in administrative and executive organizations.

Since the implementation of the above steps are essential, I draw the attention of the esteemed majles to the need for the continued work of the Supreme Administrative Council and its delegated responsibilities. Certainly, in view of the experiences of the past few years, the continuation of this council's work during the second plan can be very effective in implementing the above reforms.

Meanwhile, during the second plan the internal structures of government organizations will be reformed by reducing various layers of management, axing unnecessary establishment posts, reducing various units in a logical manner, and instituting correct and healthy relations between various organizations and members of the public, and expediting their work.

Foreign Relations: The most important goals and policies that will be pursued during the course of the second plan will include the safeguarding of national security against foreign threats, ensuring the territorial integrity of the country through good neighborly relations with our neighboring countries, defending the Muslims of the world while paying attention to priorities, guiding world public opinion and spreading the Islamic culture, providing necessary means for attracting foreign investment and modern technology.

Judicial Issues: In the course of the second plan the following goals and policies will be pursued in connection with judicial affairs and the work of registry offices: Studying the circumstances that would lead to crime and the issues that lead to judicial and legal disputes and adopting legal measures for crime prevention through the implementation of 10 research projects; quick depiction and identification of offenses and the timely prosecution of guilty individuals, adopting a decisive stance toward them and speeding up the implementation of court rulings by increasing the number of judges from 3,818 to 4,868, reducing the time spent on the investigation of each file from 60 days to 30 days on average; providing necessary facilities so that all the members of the public can have access to courts at various levels and increasing magistrates by forming 200 new magistrates and 100 new judicial units, and raising the level of 50 judicial institutions by turning the lower courts into higher courts; making provisions for increasing the number of qualified lawyers in all stages of court cases; increasing the speed and accuracy of registry offices' work by introducing more training courses, and increasing the number of registry offices by opening 50 new offices.

Housing: During the second plan, if it is supposed that the density of families living in a housing unit remains stable, it is envisaged that the total of 2.59 million houses will be built in an area of 232 million square meters throughout the country. Among those 1.553 million will be built in urban areas and 907,000 will be built in rural areas by the private sector, and the remaining 130,000 will be built by the government and government-affiliated companies.

During the second plan, it is envisaged that the government will provide low interest loans for 850,000 housing units and to support and invest in the establishment of 250,000 social housing units, housing units with small buildings for small families, young couples, and the weak strata of society.

Therefore, around 45 percent of housing units, which would be built during the second plan, will in some way benefit from reduced banking rates and government subsidies. Considering that these units have smaller buildings, it is envisaged that, in total, around 35 percent of the actual buildings in the housing sector will enjoy some kind of support and subsidy.

For the implementation of the above-mentioned programs in the second plan, resources equivalent to 34 trillion rials have been envisaged, out of which 374 billion rials are direct government investments and 1.314 billion rials are government assistance to private sector investment, and 1.622 billion rials come from the internal resources of government companies and over 30,000 billion rials will be invested by the private sector.

Urban Development: One of the main policies of that sector is the appropriate channeling of municipalities' financial resources, establishment of urban Islamic councils, and increasing municipalities' income and self-sufficiency.

During the second plan, 400 comprehensive and pilot projects have been envisaged for cities to increase the population enjoying piped drinking water by 6.5 million, improve 400 hectares [ha] of problematic orchards, increase the population benefiting from sewage systems by 2.3 million, increase public transport facilities from 55 percent to 64.7 percent, improve roads by 4,400 km, increase the number of towns protected against floods from 63 to 108, increase the population covered by fire station services from 11.4 million to 24.8 million, daily mechanical discharge and recycling of 15,800 metric tons of waste material, increase green areas by 8,000 ha, increase educational investment and urban research, and train those who provide urban services.

Electricity: During the second plan, the following actions have been envisaged to increase the capacity of power stations and provide the electricity needs of the country: Increasing the country's power stations by 12,000 megawatts, implementing building projects for a total of 18 hydroelectric power stations, transforming 10 gas power stations to compound-cycle power stations, implementing projects to provide electricity to 8,500 villages, implementing necessary works and reforming prices to make the trend of electricity consumption more logical, such that the average consumption during the second plan reaches 8.2 percent annually, implementing necessary reforms to make better coordination and improve electricity grids and electricity supply, and enhance the quality of electricity supplies to subscribers, enhancing the performance of the country's electricity system including reducing wastage, increasing the performance of power stations, and making the electricity industry and employees more efficient.

Oil: An exploration program will be implemented for the purpose of increasing identified crude oil and natural gas resources for about 1 billion barrels of accessible oil and 400 billion cubic meters of accessible gas.

For the protection of oil fields the volume of injected gas into oil fields will be increased from 54 million cubic meters per day to 130.7 million cubic meters a day in 1372. The gas will be injected into the Marun, Gachsaran, Kereng, Parsi, and other oil fields.

The volume of gas supplied to the National Iranian Gas Company—to meet domestic gas requirements—will reach 50.9 billion cubic meters in 1377 [commencing 21 March 1998] from 29.2 billion cubic meters in 1372.

In order to increase crude oil production during the years covered by the plan, about 300 wells will be drilled on land and at sea.

Following the commissioning of the Bandar Abbas and Bandar Asaluyeh refineries and the third phase of the Abadan refinery the state production of oil products will be increased from 172,386 cubic meters per day in 1372 to 242,983 cubic meters per day in 1377. The state requirements for the import of oil products will be reduced from 25,409 cubic meters per day in 1372 to 6,859 cubic meters per day in 1377.

Gas: During the years covered by the second plan, the share of natural gas in the country's hydrocarbon consumption will increase from 33 percent to 41.5 percent. The natural gas refining capacity of the country will reach 178 million cubic meters per day with the full start-up of Kangan refinery, the expansion of Bidboland refinery, the expansion of Sarkhun refinery, the expansion of Khangiran refinery, and also the first phase of south Pars refinery.

On the whole, during the second plan, 3,400 km of main natural gas pipeline will be laid and commissioned. Within the natural gas production and consumption program in various fields, 14 gas pressure boosting stations will be constructed with a capacity of 535,000 hp. It has been envisaged that 13 of those stations will be commissioned in the second plan.

During the second plan, 85 towns will be added to the number of towns supplied with gas. In addition, 750,000 new gas supply lines will be installed and 13,500 km of gas supply networks will be set up, with the completion of which the total number of the country's domestic and commercial supply lines will reach 2,650,000 and the gas supply networks will reach 47,000 km. A total of 5,880,000 households will be supplied with natural gas in the country.

The installation of a natural gas storage system near Tehran, with a capacity of 10 million cubic meters per day, has been envisaged to be used at peak consumption periods.

Transport: In the field of maintenance and improvement of existing roads in the country, as much as 11,200 km of existing roads in the country will be resurfaced with asphalt and as much as 2,260 km of the roads will be improved in the second plan.

In connection with road building and increasing the extent of road networks, in the second plan as much as 7,950 km of secondary—that is provincial and national—3,000 km of main roads, 300 km of highways, 220 km of freeways, and 4,150 km rural roads will be handed over and added to the existing state road network.

In addition, about 6,000 border roads are to be built for the purpose of maintaining border security.

During the period of the second plan, as much as 1,357 km of railways currently under construction will be handed over and added to the existing railway network. In that connection, the Bafq-Bandar Abbas and Mashhad-Sarakhs projects in the plan will be completed.

In the field of maintenance of the existing railway lines, as much as 900 km of existing lines are to be improved and 600 km of them renewed.

In the field of goods and passenger rail transport, the extent of transported goods will be increased from 20 million metric tons in 1372 to about 30 million metric tons in 1377 and the number of passengers from 9 million people in 1372 to about 12 million in 1377.

During the second plan period, while the operation index will be increased, the capacity of the state ports will be increased from 28 million metric tons in 1372 to about 33 million metric tons in 1377, and a loading and unloading capacity of as much as 6.5 million metric tons of minerals will become available in 1377.

Also six fishing ports will become operational and eight other ports in northern and southern shores of the state will be improved. While the improvement of existing operational airports and increasing the number of international airports are stressed during the second plan period, the implementation operations of nine airports under construction will continue and four airports will be handed over and commissioned by the end of the plan.

In connection with the transport of passengers through replacement and expansion of government and nongovernmental air-transport fleet—including chartering and purchase of aircraft—the extent of internal passenger transport will be increased from 7.3 million persons per annum in 1372 to about 10.8 million passengers in 1377. For international flights the number will be increased from 1.2 million annually to about 1.8. [no date as heard].

Post: With the automation of 1,646 postal units and the establishment of seven mechanical distribution and exchange centers for parcels, the necessary grounds will be established for the transfer of 3,650 million packages during the plan. The period for transporting parcels their longest distance will be cut to 72 hours. It is projected that with the introduction of a 10-number code, the speed, security, and safety of postal packages will improve. With the increase of 3,216 urban and rural postal units across the country, the installation of 32,000 post boxes, and preparations for issuing permits for the activity of non-state sectors in parallel postal services, the public use of the above services will be made possible during the second plan. With the expansion of the post's financial services, including postal drafts and savings, and an increase of 15 new services in all postal units across the country, the provision of various postal services will be made possible.

Communications: With the transfer of more than 4 million telephones by the state sector and 500,000 telephones by the non-state sector during the second plan, operational telephones will increase from 3.6 million to 8.147 million. Thus, the telephone's coefficient influence will increase from six to 12 telephones for every 100 people. With the increase of 111,000 automatic intercity channels and 225,000 telephone transfer channels and the use of digital technology and light fibers in the country's communication network, there will be a qualitative and quantitative improvement in the expansion of communications. The expansion of 53,500 public telephones and 7,650 rural communication offices will be the other activities aimed at expanding public services. With the state sector starting to operate 76,300 mobile telephone numbers and the non-state sector 58,000 mobile telephone numbers—as well as 27,500 data exchange switches and 50,000 pager numbers—there will be a new movement to improve the communication services.

Water: In the second plan and with the ending of the operations for the half-finished and new reservoir dams, and also other programs for provision of water and its transfer, it is projected that 8.6 billion cubic meters will be added to the total use of surface and underground water resources. With the implementation of national programs for the construction of irrigation systems, a total of 527,000 hectares will be added to the area covered by modern networks. In the provision of water for cities and industries, with the ending of relevant programs, a total 1.49 billion square meters will be added to the previous capacity and the urban population enjoying purified, healthy water will increase from 31.5 million to 38 million at the end of the second plan.

Agriculture: In the second plan the payment of subsidies to some agricultural institutions will continue and the policy of guaranteed prices will continue. Thus, with the growth of agricultural production in the last year of the plan, wheat production will rise to 15 million metric tons, rough rice to 3 million metric tons, sugar beets to 6.2 million metric tons, potatoes to 3.2 million metric tons, red meat to 735,000 metric tons, chicken meat to 770,000 metric tons, fish to 474,000 metric tons, eggs to 685,000 metric tons and milk to 5.6 million metric tons.

Industry and Mines:

Effective steps will be taken in the second plan in order to reform the mining and industrial infrastructure and to improve the management system. With the formulation and implementation of practical programs, the following will be supported and strengthened: Technical and engineering organizations such as planning engineering, prime planning, general contracting, study, research, technical engineering, and production units. Furthermore, financial rewards and technical support will be provided to encourage developmental research. As a result of the increase in industrial and mining production, an increasing section of domestic requirements will be provided and it is projected that the export of industrial and mining products, during the second plan, will reach $9.1 billion. Before the end of the second plan, the following productions will be reached: Steel to seven million metric tons; copper to 200,000 metric tons; lead to 40,000 metric tons; zinc to 60,000 metric tons, and aluminum to 230,000 metric tons.

Domestic Trade: It is projected that during the second plan the state's share of internal trade will gradually decrease and its' activities will be mainly limited to the provision and stocking of basic and strategic commodities toward the provision of minimum public requirements. Furthermore, the necessary means will be made available for the cooperative and private sectors to build bread producing factories with a capacity of 2 million metric tons. During the second plan, and alongside the gradual decrease of subsidies, some of the released sources of subsidies will be provided to Imam Khomeyni's relief committee to support the deprived classes. In order to decrease dependency on oil, support will be provided for non-oil exports, and it is projected that in the second plan about $24 billion will be realized through non-oil exports, in which the following have the greatest share: Industrial commodities, carpets, handicrafts, and agricultural products.

The General Budget of the Government: The figure for total expenditure in the general budget of the government in the years 1373-1377 is forecast in two different scenarios [halat] ranging between 238,000 and 246,000 billion rials. As in both scenarios the total amount of current expenditure is forecast to be about 123 billion rials, the difference between this figure and the total figures of total expenditure in the two scenarios have been reflected in development plans. The difference in development plans between the two scenarios would be about 7.5 billion rials [figure as heard]. In the second plan it has been forecast that if the government income in rials depending on the rial and dollar exchange rate reaches its roof, there would be the possibility of increasing the allocations for new plans and projects to the level of 7.5 billion rials.

The most important goal of the government in drawing up the annual budgets of the years during the second plan has been the continuation of efforts in reducing reliance upon oil income. For this reason, special attention has been paid to increasing the role of income received through taxation in the general budget of the country. As a result, tax income in the course of the second plan would enjoy an annual rate of growth amounting to 29.3 percent, and its share in the total amount of government income would be increased from 23.5 percent in the year 1372 to 24.9 percent in the year 1377. At the same time, the policy of substitution of domestic products for imports and the expansion of non-oil exports would continue.

Another important aim of the government budget in the second plan is to maintain a balance between income and expenditure in the annual budgets. On this basis, government borrowing from the banking system in order to make up for budget deficit during the years of the second plan has been put at zero. The realization of this goal would play an important role in controlling inflation and achieving economic stability in the country.

Regarding expenditure, the main aim in the second plan is to continue increasing the share of development allocations in all government expenditure. Also, in allocating development funds, stress has been laid on the completion of half-finished projects and sufficient funds have been allocated to this task. Special priority has also been given to infrastructural projects, such as water resources, electricity, oil and gas, and roads and transportation.

In current expenditure, essential priority has been given to social and cultural sectors, including public education and training, secondary school education, vocational training, higher education, welfare and social security, culture, sports, youth affairs, and health and treatment. The proportion of allocations for providing these services in the current allocation of the general budget has increased from about 36 percent in the year 1372 to more than 48.5 percent in the year 1377.

In addition, sufficient funds have been allocated for supporting low-income groups and implementing the new social security system.

The Framework of the Overall Budget for the Year 1373: The overall budget of the country in the year 1373 would amount to 79.6867 trillion rials. This figure shows a considerable increase compared to the overall budget of 1372. However, it should be pointed out that part of this increase is due to calculating foreign exchange on the basis of floating rates instead of government rates in the case of organizations that in the current year made use of foreign exchange on the basis of government rate. [The government sets a rate for exchanging dollars to rials, which is often much lower than the floating rate, which fluctuates and is higher than the official rate]

Another reason for this increase is due to the proposal for issuing licenses for a number of new infrastructural services, the income accrued from which can be spent on investment in those sectors. The list of such projects has been presented separately to the honorable majles in the appendix to the budget.

36.0118 trillion rials of the overall budget has been allocated to the general budget. This shows an increase of about 41.6 percent compared to the current year. The general budget includes 2.2442 trillion rials of expenditure from special incomes [daramadha-ye ekhtesasi].

The budget for public companies, non-profit organizations affiliated to the government, and banks, showing a 59.7 percent increase over 1372, has been set at the equivalent of 56.2941 trillion rials. From this sum, 50.0344 trillion rials has to do with public companies; 1.0432 trillion rials has to do with non-profit organizations affiliated to the government; and 5.2165 trillion rials has to do with banks.

1. The government's general budget:

A: Revenues. The revenues of the budget bill for the year 1373 have been estimated at 33.592 trillion rials, which represents a more than 42.8 percent increase over the figure for 1372. It should be said that, if there are any shortfalls arising from changes in the exchange rates, the cost of importing oil products and new expenses, the growth in the revenues of the general budget will be 6.1 percent.

Tax revenues for 1373 have been estimated, within the framework of the policies and aims of the second five year plan, at 6.4 billion rials, representing a more than 18.3 percent increase over the stated figure for the current year.

With regard to the estimation of oil revenue, while the importance of making efficient use of the capacity for the production and export of oil has been stressed, full observance of Iran's OPEC production ceiling and developments on the international oil market have also been taken into account. On this basis, oil revenue in 1373 has been estimated at the equivalent of 22.096 billion rials.

The country's other revenues in 1373 have been estimated at the equivalent of 5.097 billion rials. From this sum, the equivalent of 3.939 billion rials is made up of the elements of the budget revenue; this figure represents the equivalent of 77 percent of the government's other revenues. [sentence as heard] This figure has been stipulated as a means of creating an incentive in executive organizations to generate revenue and to save on current and development expenditures. It is expected that this figure will be realized in view of the mechanisms stipulated in the second five year plan, the budget bill for 1373 and the bill for the receipt of some government revenues and using them for specific aims.

B: Current Expenditures: Current expenditures in the budget for 1373 have been estimated at 21.154 trillion rials. Without taking into account increases resulting from changes in the exchange rate and in the cost of importing oil products, there will be about a 13.9 percent increase in current expenditures in 1372; this speaks of the government's continuing policy of trying to save on current expenditure. [sentence as heard]

In the budget for 1373, a large part of current expenditure is devoted to the social sectors, such as education, health, social security, and welfare. Current expenditure in 1373 for these sectors has been foreseen as totalling 7.863 billion rials; forming about 37 percent of all current expenditure and representing a more than 27.7 percent increase over 1372. This growth is double the size of the average increase in current expenditures in the forthcoming year.

In line with the continuation of policies to make transparent formerly hidden subsidies, considerable sums from the current expenditure for 1373 will be devoted to making up the lost purchasing power of government organizations and to preventing price rises for basic goods and services.

In addition, foreign exchange requirements relating to the import of defense equipment, basic goods, medicine, and meeting needs relating to the supply of academic staff for universities and the needs of university students and further education institutions, which had been catered for in this year's budget at government rates, have been calculated using the floating market rate for 1373; and adequate credit has been set aside in the budget of the relevant executive organizations. As an example of such funds, one can mention 3.005 trillion rials allocated for subsidies for basic necessities; 600 billion rials for chemical fertilizers; 30 billion rials assistance for free food; 30 billion rials allocated to pay for the increased cost of publishing school books as a result of changes in the exchange rate; and 210 billion rials for the cost of off season pilgrimages to Mecca.

In the current expenditure for the 1373 budget, past losses suffered by regional water companies are fully compensated and 60 billion rials in credit have been allocated for the payment of part of the funds owed to the social security organization and 100 billion rials have been allocated for back payments owed in workers' bonuses.

In continuation of the policy of changing the method of paying subsidies from the government's general budget and rechanneling its resources toward meeting the requirements of the social security system and of the society's underprivileged people, reductions have been made in the forthcoming year's budget in the level of imports relating to basic necessities distributed by coupon, using some of the financial gains to pay for welfare services to low income sections of the population.

In this connection, the current expenditure budget for welfare organizations, such as the Imam Relief Committee, the Martyr Raja'i project, the welfare organization, and the Martyr's Foundation, will in total amount to more than 1.131 billion rials, representing a 24 percent increase over the figure for the current year. This sum will be used among other things to deliver welfare services to more than 350,000 of the country's disabled people and rehabilitating about 30,000 people with social disabilities; and, as well as extending medical insurance and providing it to vulnerable sections of the population and rural residents, steps will be taken to increase payments made to the honorable parents of martyrs.

Additionally, the number of people qualifying for support services provided by the Imam Relief Committee and the country's welfare organization will increase from the current level of three million to 3.3 billion.

One of the fundamental features of the budget bill for 1373 is the prominence given to cultural and sport affairs and to meeting the spiritual requirements of society, especially the younger generation. For this purpose, a sum of more than 308 billion rials has been allocated in the forthcoming year's current expenditure for cultural and publicity activities, support for artists and writers and for sports activities.

Development Funds: Credit allocated for development projects in 1373 has been estimated at 12.614 trillion rials. This represents a 30.2 percent increase over the figure for 1372. In cases where no figure is presented for proposed expenditures, the amount allocated will be the same amount as that in 1372.

The said credit for the forthcoming year will be used to fund numerous projects, including 11 important projects that will be completed and put into operation. The important projects that will be going into operation next year consist of the first phase of the Martyr Raja'i thermal power station; the Sarkhun gas refinery; the second phase of the Arak petrochemical complex; the Bandar Khomeyni petrochemical project; the second phase of the Yazd tire plant; the Khash cement factory; the Barun dam; the 15th Khordad dam; the Tajan deviation dam; the Saveh irrigation and drainage project; and the Juneqan irrigation and drainage project.

In order to implement projects for conserving energy and for procuring the required resources for investment in the energy sector, and in order to meet the country's communications services' requirements, a total of 5.126 billion rials of the development funds allocated for 1373 will be used for oil exploration, production and transfer projects; gas transfer, refining and distribution projects; electricity production and transfer projects; and communications and postal projects. In order to provide the credit requirements of these projects, there will be appropriate increases in the average cost of these services, with a part of the resulting revenue being set aside in the treasury and allocated via the general budget. In connection with the payment of funds to assist with subsidies and to provide banking facilities to various sectors and toward the implementation of the Articles of Clauses 51 and 52 of the budget law for 1372, the sum of 70 billion rials from the development funds for 1373 will be used to repay charges accrued on banking facilities granted to the housing sector.

With regard to the distribution of the government's development funds for 1373, the main inclination will be to favor the establishment of educational and sports facilities, the expansion of land and water resources, and the improvement of infrastructure. In addition, a large part of the investment funds required in the oil, gas, and electricity sectors will be provided within the framework of the forthcoming year's development funds.

Among the fundamental priorities of the budget for 1373 will be the provision of the funds required by the country's underprivileged and less developed regions. For this purpose, more than 301 billion rials has been allocated in the budget bill for 1373 for the implementation of health education and infrastructural projects in underprivileged areas. Apart from these adequate funds, provision has also been made in the general budget, and in terms of facilities provided by the banking sector, for the establishment and expansion of economic-social activities in the country's underprivileged areas.

One of the other special features of the budget for 1373 is the particular attention given to the reconstruction of war damaged areas and the establishment of suitable conditions so that compatriots driven from their homes because of the Iran-Iraq war can return. Development credit allocated for reconstruction in the general budget will be the equivalent of 685 billion rials in 1373. From this sum, 365 billion rials will be for the implementation of provincial and national projects and 320 billion rials will be for the payment of compensation for war damage.

The provincial development budget for 1373 will be qualitatively and quantitatively better than in previous years and has been given a better structure. The main inclination of the provincial development budget for 1373 will be toward the establishment of greater equilibrium between various regions and to favor underprivileged and less developed areas. The provincial development budget for 1373 has been estimated at 1.9306 trillion rials, which represents a 17.1 percent increase over 1372. The main inclination in the allocation of provincial funds will be to favor the fulfillment of educational, health and medical needs, and infrastructural requirements, such as the construction of roads, the provision of electricity, and the provision of drinking water to villages, as well as productive activities, such as agriculture and water resources. In addition to the said funds, provisions have also been made in various parts and clauses of the budget for special funds for development projects in provinces; considerably increasing the overall size of the credit allocated to provinces.

Dear listeners, what you have just heard has been the full text of the president's speech delivered at the time of the presentation of the bills for the budget and the second five-year plan.

Interior Minister Backed on 'Den of Spies' Protest

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[Editorial by Seyyed Morteza Nabavi: "A Question for the Interior Minister"]

[Text] Using his legal rights, one of the esteemed Majles deputies—Hazrati from Rasht—asked the interior minister: "Why did the Interior Ministry stop students from the Islamic councils of Tehran Universities staging a rally from Tehran University to the den of espionage on 2 November 1993?"

The occupation of the den of spies and the ending of American domination represented a revolution, which has been recorded in the name of "the Muslim students following the imam's line" in the glorious history of the Islamic Republic. The anniversary of the day on which the den of spies was occupied is marked as "the national day of struggle against world arrogance" and each year the Iranian nation cherishes the memory of that day. For a few years now, students of the Unity Consolidation Bureau [UCB] have separated their accounts from those of the nation and mark this anniversary separately.

This year, they held their ceremony on 2 November instead of 4 November. They requested permission from the Interior Ministry to stage a march but permission was not granted. In his speech at the ceremony in front of Tehran University, a ceremony that correspondents say was attended by only a few hundred people, former Interior Minister Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohtashemi, instead of aiming his attacks at America and Israel, attacked the interior minister and the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, calling for Besharati's resignation or the interpellation of the government. He asked: "What has happened to change the policy of confronting world arrogance in 1993?"

Dear members of the UCB! Dear speaker at the anti-American ceremony of 2 November! Has the system's policy on confronting arrogance changed in 1993? Has America's enmity toward the Islamic Republic of Iran lessened? Was this the only anti-American maneuver you had to offer?!

Without doubting the intentions of the dear Majles deputy or the UCB students and without protesting that a question has been put to the interior minister to answer, there are a few questions we would like to ask:

1. Since 4 November is the "national" day of struggle against world arrogance, why should a student organization separate its accounts from the masses', from other students and student organizations, and from revolutionary groups and want to stage a march on 2 November instead of 4 November?

2. Didn't his eminence the imam, may his soul be sanctified, establish the Supreme Council of the Islamic Propaganda Organization in which the UCB too is represented to create greater coordination for better, more spectacular marking of such ceremonies? Why should the Islamic councils of Tehran's universities branch off from this? What was the problem for these dear students in attending the same ceremony that was planned in front of the den of spies on 4 November?

3. Wouldn't it have been better for the esteemed Majles deputy to advise the students to participate in the antiblasphemy ceremony [on 4 November] than make an issue of the interior minister's ban on the march, which only created misgivings, such as comments that only a "few hundred" members of Tehran Universities Islamic councils are anti-American, while the remainder may be compromisers?

4. Was the national ceremony of struggle against world arrogance, which students staged in front of the main entrance of Tehran University on 2 November, an arena against criminal America and its associates or was it a place to interpellate the Islamic government and the system's domestic, foreign, and economic policies?! Is a plan for doing away with politics, to which Mohtashemi referred in his 2 November speech, being implemented in Iran? Do some students avoid politics because of the monopolistic attitude of these esteemed student organizations in the past and the speaker's political faction? Have the masses, the poor, the oppressed, and the destitute been trampled on as Mohtashemi claimed?

At what point in history has so much assistance been extended to the oppressed in Iran? Can the spirit of his eminence the imam, may his soul be sanctified, rest in peace after all your criticism and accusation?

I announce my readiness to participate in a debate with Mohtashemi if any of the Islamic councils organizes an economic roundtable discussion so that the weak and strong points, the roots of the economic problems, and their links can be explained! Meanwhile, we should draw a line between the weakness and poor conduct by some economic officials and the system's policies.

5. Should the statements against the system, the government, and its policies be in concordance with the international circles that are so-called supporters of human rights? Is what Mr. Mohtashemi claimed when he said that "the fragrant flowers of this revolution are withering and thorns are emerging" true? Please tell us what those who make such remarks are: the fragrant flowers that are withering or the thorns?

Of course if these students had been allowed to march, nothing more would have happened and there would not have been any pretext to question the interior minister.

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out that I have great respect for the Islamic student councils, for the UCB, and for Mr. Mohtashemi. I consider their presence to be necessary. What I have written in this column is only brotherly advice. I consider both Mr. Besharati, the current interior minister, and Mr. Mohtashemi, the former interior minister, to be among the revolutionary elements. When Mr. Mohtashemi was struggling against the Pahlavi regime abroad, Mr. Besharati was being tortured by the shah's SAVAK in prison at home. Both of them are anti-American, anti-Israeli, and anticapitalist, and both support the grandeur of the oppressed.

Islamic Movement of Kurdestan Denies Arrest of Leader

LD2912225993 Tehran IRNA in English 2040 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Sannandaj, Kurdestan Prov., Dec. 29, (IRNA)—A close source to the Islamic Movement of Iraq's Kurdestan here today denied the report on the arrest of the leader of the movement, Molla Othman Abd-al-Aziz.

The source revealed that Abdel-Aziz is staying at a camp belonging to Masoud Barezani, leader of the Kurdestan's Democratic Party, whose forces rescued Abd-al-Aziz from the battlefield and brought him to Salaheddin region, northern Iraq.

Meanwhile, the Western media earlier quoting from Patriotic Union of Kurdestan, reported the arrest of Abd-al-Aziz.

According to the source, current clashes between the forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdestan and the Islamic Movement started last Saturday in northern Iraqi city of Rania when Talebani's guerrillas opened fire on funeral procession of a member of the Islamic Movement, who had been killed in a clash between forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdestan and the Islamic Movement in southern Iraqi province of Suleimaniya.

Political observers believe that tensions would increase between the two rival factions in northern Iraq if the Patriotic Union insisted on return of Abd-al-Aziz by Kurdestan's Democratic Party.

The two rival factions, Kurdestan's Democratic Party and Patriotic Union have signed several agreements over the past three years aiming to prevent further clashes, among them an agreement between Talebani and Barezani within the Leadership Council of Kurdestan.

It is said that Barezani resigned his position as the president of the self-declared Kurdestan government, due to the fact that his demand for halting of the clashes were ignored by the Patriotic Uinon of Kurdestan.

Pakistan

Editorial Views U.S. Regional Foreign Policy

BK3012101393 Islamabad THE NATION in English 30 Dec 93 p 6

[Editorial: "U.S. Annual Report"]

[Text] According to the year-end review of US policy towards South Asia there has been a slight shift towards greater balance on issues of nuclear non-proliferation and Kashmir. On non-proliferation there is now a realisation that the Pressler Amendment's language which was country-specific, detracted from its merit as a fair law. In order to dilute, if not to remove that flaw, the Clinton administration now intends to enact a law which would give greater discretion to the President in aid disbursement, if he felt so inclined in the national interest. On the other hand that law would empower him to stop such aid to any country which was not meeting the US concerns on non-proliferation. This has been interpreted by some in Pakistan as opening the possibility of resumption of aid to Pakistan or if not that, at least to block aid to India. In the case of Pakistan's claim that links its nuclear programme to the Kashmir dispute and the Indian argument of its keeping the nuclear option because of a threat from China, the US administration has apparently not taken a firm position. And yet it holds that neither has enough merit to justify any launching into the military uses of nuclear technology. The US's acknowlegement that Kashmir is a disputed territory and not an integral part of India, plus US's somewhat muted concern on human rights abuses in the Held Kashmir, may look like a concession to Pakistan, but it may well have been dictated by the US's policy of supporting UN resolutions and its general disapproval of human rights violations.

Seen in this context, there seems to be little cause for optimism about the US adopting a more understanding attitude towards Pakistan. In fact, Benazir's recent statement that Pakistan and China would jointly resist US pressure against both countries, may aggravate the negative perceptions that already exist about Pakistan in some circles of the US congress, especially among the Pressler supporters. The bottom line in the case of Pakistan, nevertheless, is the US's reading of Pakistan-India stand-off, basically relating to two important questions. Is Pakistan's nuclear programme linked to a valid enough threat perception to its security? If it is, how must that be addressed? And, on the other hand, is India's nuclear programme linked to any valid threat to its secuirty? And if not, why is India arming itself to the teeth?

Editorial Views Bhutto Visit to China

BK3012120793 Rawalpindi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 27 Dec 93 p 10

[Editorial: "The Prime Minister's Visit to China: Vast Scope for Expanding Bilateral Ties"]

[Text] Prime Minister Ms. Benazir Bhutto is on an official visit to China. This visit assumes significance against the backdrop of the establishment of a newly elected government in Pakistan, the revamping of China-India ties, and the pressure of America's new world order. From the beginning, there have been extremely close and cordial relations between Pakistan and China. The friendship between the two countries can be described as exemplary, and the role of China in the construction of the Silk Route has made the bilateral relations as strong as the Karakoram Highway. China has cooperated benevolently with Pakistan in its developmental projects and has also provided generous assistance to the defense sector. In this regard, China did not even mind the U.S. pressure.

On global issues, the stand of Pakistan and China has been identical, and their hostility toward India was also on an equal level because of their friendship. However, now China and India have settled their border dispute and have signed an accord not to attack each other. Therefore, now, the Indian Army's target in the subcontinent is only Pakistan. Against this backdrop, Pakistan should counsel China that the revamping of its ties with India should not be at the cost of its friendship with Pakistan and that China should not be so lenient toward India, enabling it to get rid of other threats and attack Pakistan.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, China is the only force that challenges the American hegemony in the world, and the United States has exerted full pressure on China to prevent it from making independent decisions. China has also been pressured not to provide missiles or related technologies to Pakistan. However, it has ignored the U.S. pressure in a dignified manner and has reaffirmed its determination to continue its friendship with Pakistan. In fact, if there is any challenge to the U.S. hegemony at all and its policing of the new world order in the region, it is China, and the free world is looking for China to protect its existence and freedom. We can hope that China will be the source of our strength and protection.

In an interview with the ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN, Chinese Premier Li Peng has said that the cooperation between Pakistan and China has expanded, bilateral trade has been promoted, and that both countries are the biggest trading partners in South Asia. Taking note of the trade imbalance between the two countries, the Chinese premier has said that steps are being taken to increase imports from Pakistan and that China intends to purchase all essential commodities from Pakistan. The sentiments expressed by the Chinese premier are praiseworthy, and they fully reflect the fact that the bilateral relations have assumed an exemplary nature. Although there is great scope for cooperation with China in numerous technological and economic fields, it has been felt that in the future these ties should be exploited in the following context. As other countries are forming their economic blocks, the Economic Conference Organization—ECO—should be expanded in the region, and China should be incorporated in it. The present foreign minister made an extensive visit to the Central Asian states during the tenure of the previous government and compiled a report. That report can now be made the basis for promoting relations among the ECO countries, and the inclusion of China in ECO will pave the way for strengthening the organization.

In the past, China never disappointed Pakistan. Hopefully, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's visit will bring China and Pakistan still closer and help maintain a healthy balance of power in the region. The Chinese leadership itself has felt the need for removing the trade deficit between Pakistan and China. For this, solid and consistent agreements are needed, which are expected to be signed during the current visit. Pakistan is proud of its friendship with China, and the prime minister's visit to China may create a vast scope for expanding bilateral relations.

Editorial Examines Friendship With China

BK3012102193 Islamabad THE NATION in English 30 Dec 93 p 6

[Editorial: "A Solid Friendship"]

[Text] Pakistan and China, at the conclusion of PM Benazir Bhutto's visit, have reaffirmed in many ways the abiding and solid friendship between the two neighbours that has stood the test of time and adversity. China is emerging as the next likely superpower, perhaps within the next 15 years or so. Its economy is showing a massive growth rate of 13 percent which, combined with its achievements in the technological field, indicate the vast potential area of economic and defence cooepration between the two countries. Given that potential, it is no accident that the five agreements signed in Beijing relate basically to economic and trade cooperation, apart from the declaration of Punjab and Jiangsu as twin provinces. China has also extended a soft loan of 80 million Yuan. The yawning trade deficit between the two countries of $350 million a year, is sought to be reduced by China's commitment to increase imports from Pakistan. In addition, the PM offered Chinese investors free trade zones and other concessions and incentives. It would be advisable to ensure proper follow-up of the offer, unlike our usual penchant for creative flair in ideas which find inadequate reflection in implementation on the ground.

On political issues too, the mutual agreement in perception and approach is as close as ever. One impression that was being peddled by India that it had resolved all its problems with China, implying that would adversely affect Pak-China relations, was put at rest unequivocally by the highest Chinese authorities. The Chinese have consistently wished for negotiations to ease tensions and discuss mutual problems with India while reaffirming their commitment to the old and weather-proof friendship with Pakistan. On Kashmir, China reiterated its support for Pakistan's principled stand and sympathised with the plight of the Kashmiri people. China has also welcomed the Foreign Secretaries talks in January, as part of all efforts conducive to a formal settlement of a nagging problem inherited from history. The Chinese position on possible mediation is that it would be willing to help if both sides requested it. Since India has so far not indicated its willingness for such mediation, the possibility remains only theoretical. In turn Pakistan supports China on the issues of Tibet, Taiwan, Hong Kong and human rights. Both countries issued a strong call for lifting the unjustified sanctions imposed by the US after accusations that China had violated the Missiles Technology control Regime (MTCR) by exporting M-11 missiles to Pakistan. On the nuclear issue, China supports Pakistan's stand on a regional approach in consonance with its security concerns. North Korea's current stand-off with the US on the nuclear issue also came up for discussion, given Benazir's next stop in Pyongyang. Despite apprehensions that the Prime Minister's North Korean visit at this juncture might not please the Americans, Benazir referred on the eve of her departure from Islamabad to the historic role played by Pakistan in the past of creating bridges between the erstwhile hostile US and China. Whether such a role will be possible in the context of US-North Korean tensions will only be clear after the Prime Minister has had talks with the Kim Il-song regime. The enduring fact remains that the visit to China has proved once again, if such proof were required, that the friendship between Pakistan and China stands as tall and as solid as the Himalayas.

Minister Warns of 'Unsafe' Nuclear Project

BK2912123393 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 29 Dec 93 pp 1, 5

[Text] Islamabad—According to responsible sources, Federal Minister Sher Afghan Khan Niazi has made sensational revelations to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto about the 300-megawatt nuclear power plant being constructed with Chinese assistance in Chashma. The federal minister informed the prime minister that the manner in which the 300-megawatt nuclear power plant's monitoring system is being constructed is certainly unsafe, and it may cause a Chernobyl-type situation. The minister told the prime minister that some changes were made in this nuclear power project during the rule of former Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, and that the project is now being built on the basis of [words indistinct] instead of "manufacturing." No Pakistani engineers have been involved in the construction of the project, and none of the 2,800 unskilled workers working on the project come from Pakistan.

The federal minister also informed the prime minister that Japan and the European countries have declined to provide a reliable monitoring system for this 300-megawatt nuclear power plant. Under these circumstances, the monitoring system will have to be built locally. In this manner, the Chashma plant will be used as a laboratory to develop this monitoring system for the first time. This will be very dangerous and may create a situation similar to the one witnessed at the Chernobyl nuclear plant.

President on Kashmir, India, Pressler Law

BK3012042793 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Text] President Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said that democracy is taking root in the country and the government is functioning in a satisfactory manner. He spoke to newsmen in Rawalpindi last night and said that the National Assembly, which emerged after free, fair, and impartial elections, will enact laws to improve the condition of common people. He said my door is open to all politicians and I will be happy to meet the opposition leader.

The president said that Pakistan fully supports the valiant struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination. It has always been the policy of Pakistan to resolve the issue in accordance with UN resolutions. He expressed concern over the massive oppression and atrocities in occupied Kashmir by Indian forces.

Referring to the upcoming Pakistan-India foreign secretary-level talks in Islamabad, the president said that Pakistan will utilize all forums to resolve the issue. He expressed hope that there will be progress in the talks.

On the Pressler Amendment, President Leghari said that it has been realized even in the U.S. Administration that it is a discriminatory law, which is not beneficial for their foreign policy interests. He added that, keeping this fact in mind, the Clinton administration has submitted to the Congress a new act on foreign aid.

Spokesman Accuses India of 'Disinformation'

BK3012091493 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 30 Dec 93

[Text] A Foreign Office spokesman today dismissed Indian press reports alleging Pakistan of fomenting trouble in northeastern Indian states, describing it as an attempt to externalize its internal difficulties. He said such reports were mere fabrication and figment of Indian imagination. He said it had neither any credibility in Pakistan nor gained any credence in the world community. Talking to APP, the spokesman said Indian media and authorities have launched a disinformation campaign against intelligence agencies of Pakistan by concocting stories about them. The Foreign Office spokesman said it had been Indian syndrome to explain its internal difficulties by bringing in external factors.

Minister Discusses Indian Forces in Rajasthan

BK2812143893 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] The Senate was informed today that the armed forces are fully cognizant of the situation on the international borders and are fully vigilant to deal with any eventuality. Federal Minister for Interior Retired Major General Nasiruallah Khan Babar told the house that the movement of the Indian forces in Rajasthan sector is part of their normal winter exercises. However, he said, these exercises are not of the magnitudue of Brass Tack exercises conducted a few years ago. The interior minister, while opposing the adjournment motion sought to be moved by Professor Khurshid Ahmad, said Pakistan armed forces have also completed their winter exercises recently. He assured the House that the winter military exercises by India should not be a cause of concern as the Government of Pakistan is fully aware of the situation. The interior minister said Pakistan has asked India that it should reduce its troops and brutal repressive measures against Kashmiris for making the forthcoming foreign secretary-level talks fruitful. He said the talks between the two countries will be held on 1 January in Islamabad to discuss all aspects of the Kashmir dispute. After the statement of the minister, the mover did not press his motion.

Saudi Minister Announces Grant for 4 Projects

BK2912055393 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi deputy prime minister and defense minister, has announced a grant of 21.95 million rupees for the construction of four projects in the Chaghai District of Balochistan. He made the announcement during the foundation-laying ceremony for these projects in the Dalbandin area yesterday. The foundation stone was laid by Prince Fahd Bin-Sultan Bin-'Abd al-'Aziz, the governor of Tabuk.

Official Says Belgium Releasing Amanullah Khan

BK2912160293 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 29 Dec 93

[Text] The Belgian Government has acquitted Amanullah Khan, chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, after keeping him in detention for about two and a half months. A Foreign Office official said in Islamabad that the Belgian authorities have informed the Pakistani ambassador in Brussels that Amanullah Khan is being sent to Pakistan. It may be recalled that Amanullah Khan was taken into custody when he had gone to Brussels to participate in an international conference on Kashmir which was organized by the Socialist Group in the European Parliament in October this year.

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